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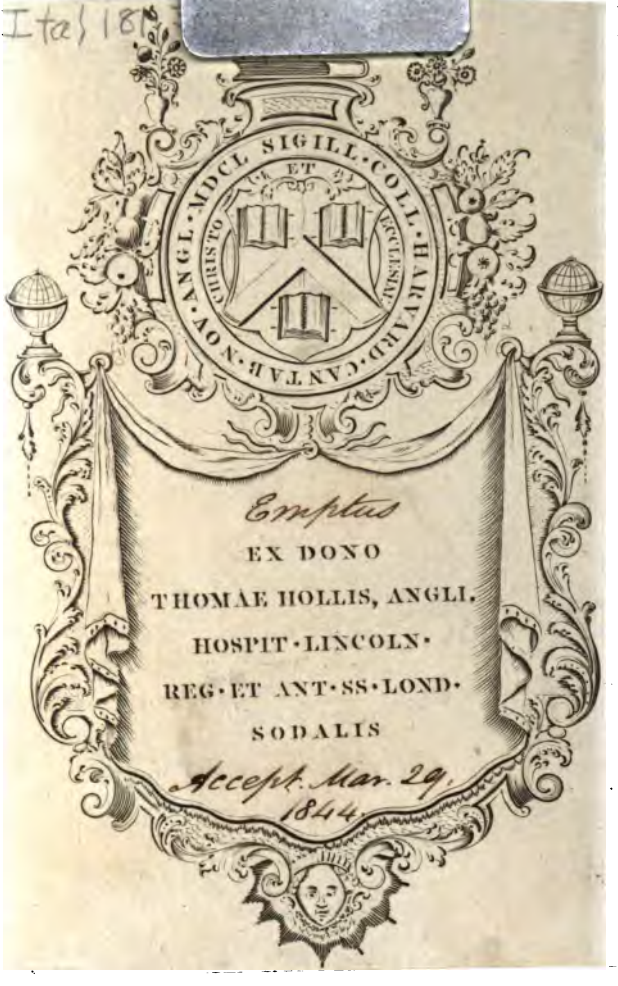

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MEMOIRS

OF

GOLDONI,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

FORMING A COMPLETE

HISTORY OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH,

By JOHN BLACK.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MEMOIRS OF GOLDONI.

CONTINUATION OF PART II.

CHAPTER I.

Consequences of my severe labours—Ingratitude of the director—Plan of the first edition of my 'Theatre'—First volume of my works—My journey to Turin—A few words respecting that city—'Molière,' a comedy of five acts, in verse—History of that piece—Its success at Turin—My journey to Genoa—My return to Venice—First representation of 'Molière' in that capital—Its success—'The Father of a Family,' a comedy in three acts—'The Venetian Advocate'—'The Feudatory'—'The Obedient Daughter.'

At the age of forty-three, I had a great facility both in invention and execution, but still I was a man subject to infirmities like others. The assiduity of my labours at length undermined my health, and I fell sick, and paid the penalty of my folly.

I was always subject to fits of spleen, which attacked body and mind at once; but I felt a renewal of them at this time with more violence than ever.

I was literally worn out with fatigue, but still my wretched state was, in a great measure, occasioned by the chagrin which I felt. I must conceal nothing from my readers.

I had given sixteen pieces in the course of a year.

The director, it is true, did not demand them; but still he profited by them. What benefit had I derived? Not a farthing beyond the annual stipulation, not the smallest gratification. I received abundance of praise, and a profusion of compliments, but not the most trifling acknowledgment. I was displeased at this, but I said nothing.

However, we cannot live on glory alone; and I had no other resource but an edition of my works. Who would suppose that in this I should meet with opposition from Medebac, and that some of his protectors should approve of the opposition?

This man disputed my right of authorship under the pretext of having purchased my works. Of the period of our engagement there was still some time to run; I could not, or rather I was unwilling, to enter into a litigation with persons whom I should have occasion to see every day; I was too great a lover of peace to sacrifice it to interest; and I yielded my pretensions, and was satisfied with the permission of printing every year a single volume of my comedies. From this singular permission, I discovered that Medebac counted upon my remaining attached to him during my whole life; but I waited the expiration of my fifth year to take my leave of him.

I gave the manuscripts of four of my pieces to Antonio Bettinelli, the bookseller, who undertook the first edition of my 'Theatre,' and published the first volume at Venice in 1751.

Our company were to pass the spring and summer at Turin. I thought that a change of air, and the pleasure of the journey, might contribute to the restoration of my health. I followed the company at my own expense; and, in the intention of visiting Genoa, I took my dear companion along with me.

I was unacquainted with Turin, which I found a delightful place. The uniformity of the buildings in the principal streets produce a charming effect. The squares and churches are exceedingly beautiful; the

citadel is a superb promenade; and the royal residences, both in town and country, display great magnificence and taste. The inhabitants of Turin are very kind and polite; they have much of the manners and customs of the French, and speak the language familiarly; and on the arrival of a Milanese, a Venetian, or a Genoese, they are in the habit of saying, "He is an Italian."

My pieces were represented at Turin with applause, to crowded audiences; but there were a set of singular beings, who, at every one of my productions, observed, "This is good, but it is not Molière." This was doing me more honour than I deserved, for it had never entered into my head to compare myself with the French author. I knew that those who pronounced this vague and ridiculous judgment, merely went to the theatre for the sake of making the circuit of the boxes, and indulging in conversation.

I was acquainted with Molière, and respected this master of the art as highly as the Piedmontese, and I was seized instantly with a desire to give them a convincing proof of it.

I immediately composed a comedy in five acts, and in verse, without masks or change of scene, of which the title and principal subject were Molière himself.

The argument was taken from two anecdotes of his private life: the one, his projected marriage with Isabelle, the daughter of Bejard; and the other, the prohibition of his 'Tartuffe.' These two historical facts accord so well together, that the unity of action is perfectly observed.

The impostors of Paris, alarmed at the comedy of 'Molière,' knew that the author had sent to the camp, where Louis XIV then was, to obtain permission for its representation, and they were afraid lest the revocation of the prohibition should be obtained.

I employed in my piece a person of the name of Pirlon, a hypocrite in every sense of the word, who introduces himself into the author's house; discovers

to La Bejard Molière's love for her daughter, of which she was yet ignorant, engages her to quit her companion and director; behaves in the same manner to Isabelle, holding up to her the situation of an actress as the road to perdition, and endeavours to seduce La Foret, their waiting-woman, who, more adroit than her mistresses, dupes the duper, inspires him with a love for her, and takes his cloak and hat from him to give to Molière, who appears on the stage with the dress of the impostor.

I was bold enough to exhibit in my piece a much more marked hypocrite than that of Molière; but hypocrites had then lost a great deal of their ancient credit in Italy.

During the interval between the fourth and last acts of my comedy, the 'Tartuffe' of Molière is acted on the theatre of the Hotel de Bourgogne; all the characters of my piece make their appearance in the fifth act, for the purpose of complimenting Molière: Pirlon, concealed in a closet, where he was expecting La Foret, is forced to come forth in the presence of all the spectators, and is assailed with the sarcasms which he so richly deserved; and Molière, to add to his joy and happiness, marries Isabelle, in spite of the mother, who aspired to the conquest of her future son-in-law.

In this piece are to be found several details of the life of Molière. The character of Valerio is Baron, an actor of Molière's company. Leander is a copy of La Chapelle, a friend of the author, and often mentioned in the account of his life; and count Lasca is one of the Piedmontese who judged of pieces without seeing them, and instituted an awkward comparison between the Venetian and French authors, that is to say, between the scholar and the master.

This work is in verse: I had composed tragi-comedies in blank verse, but this is the first comedy which I composed in rhyme.

As its subject was a French author, who wrote

largely in that style, it became necessary to imitate him; and I found nothing that approached the Alexdrines but the Martellian verses, of which I have already spoken in the first part of these memoirs.

On the conclusion of my piece, and the distribution of the parts, I witnessed two rehearsals at Turin, and set out for Genoa without seeing it acted.

The actors, and a few of the townspeople, were let into the secret of the character of count Lasca. I charged them to acquaint me with the result; and I learned, a few days afterwards, that the piece had the greatest success; that the original of the criticism was discovered, and that he had been candid enough to avow that it was deserved.

I remained the whole summer at Genoa, leading a most delicious and completely idle life. How delightful it is, especially after much severe labour, to pass a few days without doing anything! But the autumn was fast approaching; the season began to grow more cool, and I resumed the road to my workshop.

On arriving at Venice, I found my first volume in print, and money in the hands of my bookseller. I received at the same time a gold watch, a box of the same metal, a silver board with chocolate, and four pair of Venice ruffles. These were presents from those to whom I had dedicated my four first comedies.

Medebac arrived a few days after me, and spoke highly of the pleasure which 'Molière' gave at Turin. I had a strong desire to see it myself; and we brought it out at Venice in the month of October 1751.

This piece contained two novelties, the subject and the versification; for the Martellian verses were at that time forgotten. The monotony of the cesural pause, the great frequency of the rhyme, and the perpetual recurrence of couplets, disgusted the ears of the Italians during the life-time of the inventor, and every person was prejudiced against me for pretending to revive a mode of versification already proscribed.

But the effect gave the lie to this anticipation; my

verses were equally well relished with the piece, and 'Molière' was classed by the public voice along with 'Pamela.'

Were I permitted to pronounce my own opinion of the relative worth of my comedies, I should have a great deal to say in favour of the 'Padre di Famiglia' (Father of a Family); but, taking the decision of the public respecting my works for my guide, I am forced to rank it only in the second class of my comedies.

I bestowed all the care which my observation and my zeal inspired me with on this interesting subject; and I was even tempted to call my piece the 'School for Fathers;' but great masters have alone a right to give Schools; and I might possibly be deceived as well as the author of the 'School for Widows.'

I had seen in the world indulgent mothers, unjust stepmothers, spoiled children, and dangerous preceptors; I grouped all these different objects in a single picture, and in the conduct of a wise and prudent father, I exhibited a strong instance of the proper punishment of vice and the example of virtue.

In this comedy there is another father, by way of episode, who contributes to the development and winding-up of the plot. This father has two daughters; the one brought up at home, and the other educated at an aunt's, by which a convent is meant, as this word dare not, in Italy, be pronounced on the stage.

The first turns out well, but the other has every possible defect concealed under the mask of hypocrisy. My intention was to give the preference to a domestic education; and this was perfectly understood by the public, and met with their approbation.

To this moral and critical piece, an interesting and virtuous subject succeeded, which was infinitely relished, and which the public placed in the first class of my productions: this was 'The Venetian Advocate.'

In my comedy of 'The Prudent Man' I had given a specimen of my old profession of criminal advocate in Tuscany; in the present, I wished to recall to the

the two characters. The work loses in point of surprize when one man is not tranformed into two different characters; but the piece is still the same, and, from its new form, I called it 'I Mercanti' ('The Merchants.') This piece was very fortunate in its origin, and has been no less successful on several theatres of Italy as it is now printed.

I was very well pleased with the three pieces which I had given in the course of the carnival; but the end of the comic year was approaching, and it became necessary to close it with something for the amusement of those who only go to the theatre in Shrovetide, without displeasing those who frequent it the whole year through.

This desideratum I had already provided for, having a month beforehand composed a comedy with that view under the title of 'Le Donne Gelose,' ('The Jealous Wives,') a Venetian piece.

This comedy produced the best effect, and the character of Lucrezia, by Coralina, was given with such energy and truth that the piece had the most brilliant success.

So much the worse for madame Medebac—the poor woman relapsed into her jealous fits.

The ill-humour of madame Medebac had an apparent effect upon me also; with this difference, however, that her disease was merely imaginary, whereas mine was a real bodily affliction.

I still felt at that time, and have ever since continued to feel, the consequences of the excessive fatigue I sustained in composing my sixteen comedies. I required a change of air and I went to join my comedians at Bologna.

On my arrival in this town, I entered a coffee-house facing the church of St Petronius. No one knew who I was. A few minutes after my entrance, a nobleman of that country came in, and addressing himself to five or six persons of his acquaintance, seated round a table, he said to them in good Bolognese, "Have you

heard the news, my friends?"—He was asked what he alluded to, and he answered, "Goldoni has just arrived."

"That is of no consequence to me," said one.—"What is that to us?" said another. The third answered more politely; "I should be very glad to see him."—"A fine object to see, truly!" said the two former.—"He is the author of those beautiful comedies," said the other. Here he was interrupted by the man who had not yet spoken, and who exclaimed aloud, "O yes, the great author! the magnificent author, who has suppressed masks and ruined comedy!"—At that moment doctor Fiume arrived, who said, while he embraced me, "Welcome, my dear Goldoni."

The person who had expressed a desire to know me advanced towards me, and the others stole out one by one without saying a word.

I was highly amused with this little scene. I was glad to see the doctor, who some years before had been my physician, and I made the best return I could to the polite Bolognese, who had expressed so good an opinion of me. We all went out together to call on the marquis d'Albergati Capacelli, a senator of Bologna.

This nobleman, well known in the republic of letters, from his translations of several French tragedies, from several good comedies of his own composition, and still more from the high opinion entertained of him by Voltaire, independently of his science and his genius, possessed an admirable talent for theatrical declamation. There were no actors or amateurs then in Italy who equalled him in representing tragedy heroes, or lovers in comedy.

His country, whose delight he was, had the pleasure of enjoying his talents sometimes at Zola and sometimes at Medicina, his estates; where he was seconded by male and female amateurs, whom he animated by his intelligence and experience. I was

fortunate enough to contribute to his pleasure, having composed five pieces for his theatre, of which I shall give some account at the end of this second part.

M. d'Albergati always showed great kindness and friendship for me. I made his house my home whenever I went to Bologna, and, in our present distance from each other, he has not forgotten me, having addressed one of his comedies to me, preceded by a very charming epistle, with which I have every reason to be highly flattered.

During my stay in Bologna I did not lose my time, I laboured for my theatre, and composed, among other things, a comedy intitled 'Il Pontigli Domestici,' ('The Domestic Disputes,') with which we opened, at Venice, the comic year 1752.

I passed from an interesting subject to one of a comic nature. I had seen a very rich man with an only daughter, who was young and pretty, and who possessed a fine talent for poetry, to whose marriage he would not give his consent that he might have the sole enjoyment of this charming muse.

He held literary assemblies in his house. Every one went with pleasure for the sake of the daughter; but the ridiculous behaviour of the father was quite insufferable.

When the young lady recited her verses, this infatuated man used to rise from his seat; he would look about him to the right and left, and enjoin strict silence. A sneeze discomposed him; he was offended if snuff were taken; and he exhibited such a variety of gestures and contortions, that it was the most difficult thing in the world to refrain from laughter.

When the verses of the daughter were finished the father was the first to applaud them, and then he left the circle. Without the smallest consideration for those poets who were reciting their compositions, he went behind the chairs of all present, expressing himself loudly, and with the utmost indecorum, in such

terms as these: "Did you hear my daughter? What do you think of her? This is quite another thing!"

I was several times present at scenes of this nature; but the last which I witnessed took rather an unfortunate turn; for the authors quarrelled in good earnest, and quitted the place very abruptly.

This foolish father determined on a journey to Rome, that his daughter might be crowned in the capitol. He was prevented by the relations of the family; and the government having at length interfered in the business, the lady was married in spite of him; the consequence of which was, that fifteen days afterwards he fell sick and died of chagrin.

On this anecdote I composed a comedy under the title of 'Il Poeta Fanatico,' ('The Fanatical Poet,') in which I was induced to give the father also a taste of some kind or other for poetry, for the sake of throwing more gaiety into the piece; this work, however, is by no means equal to the 'Metromanie' of Piron; but, on the contrary, one of my most indifferent comedies.

It met however with some success at Venice; but this was owing to the entertainment which I had thrown into the principal subject. Collalto acted a young improvisatore, and in the delivery of his verses pleased by the graces of his singing. The servant was also a poet, and his compositions and burlesque impromptus were very amusing; but a comedy without interest, intrigue, or suspense, notwithstanding the beauties of particular parts, is still, after all, a poor piece.

Why was it printed then? Because the booksellers lay hold of everything, without so much as consulting the authors, even during their own lifetime.

On the arrival of the Christmas holidays, of the year 1751, it became time to put Medebac in mind that the end of our engagement was approaching, and to give him notice not to rely on me for the following year.

I spoke to him in an amicable way, and without any formality. He answered me very politely, that he was sorry for it, but that I was the master of my own inclinations. He did his utmost, however, to induce me to remain with him, and even sent several of his friends to speak to me on the subject; but my resolution was firmly fixed; and during the ten days of relaxation I entered into an agreement with his excellency Vendramini, a noble Venetian, and proprietor of the theatre of Saint Luke.

I had still to labour for the theatre of Saint Angelo till the close of 1752; and I discharged my duty so well that I gave more pieces to the director than he had time to act, and he had some remaining which he used after our separation.

Madame Medebac was still unwell; her ill-humours became every day more troublesome and ridiculous: she laughed and wept in the same instant, and uttered cries and exhibited grimaces and contortions. The good people of the family thought her bewitched, and sent for exorcists. She was loaded with relics, and played with these pious monuments like a child of four years of age.

Seeing the principal actress unable to appear on the stage, I composed, at the opening of the carnival, a comedy for Coralina. Madame Medebac made her appearance in good health on Christmas-day; but on hearing that 'La Locandiera,' a new piece, composed for Coralina, was given out for the following day, she took to her bed again with a new species of fits, which completely exhausted the patience of her mother, husband, relations, and servants.

We opened the theatre then on the 26th of December with 'La Locandiera,' a word derived from locanda, which has the same signification in Italian as *hotel garni* in French. There is no word, however, in the French language to indicate the man or woman who keeps one of those hotels; and, in translating this piece into French, it would be necessary to take

the title from the character, and call it 'The Dextrous Woman,' ('Femme Adroite.')

The success of this piece was so brilliant that it was not only placed on a level with, but even preferred to, everything which I had yet done in that species of comedy where artifice supplies the place of interest.

It would perhaps be scarcely credited, without reading it, that the projects, proceedings, and triumph of the heroine of the piece, could all take place, with probability, in the space of twenty-four hours.

I was perhaps flattered in Italy; but I was told that it was the most natural and best conducted of all my pieces, and that the action was completely supported and perfect in every respect.

From the jealousy with which madame Medebac viewed the progress of Coralina, this last piece, one might have thought, would have killed her outright; but as her disorder was quite singular in its kind, she quitted her bed in two days and demanded the representation of the 'Locandiera' to be stopped for the purpose of again giving out 'Pamela.'

The public was not highly satisfied with this; but the director did not think proper to oppose the desire of his wife: and 'Pamela' appeared again on the theatre after the fourth representation of a fortunate and new comedy. These little pieces of kindness will every now and then take place where despotism disdains to yield to reason. For my part I had nothing to say in the business; the dispute related to two of my daughters, and I was a tender father to both the one and the other.

After several representations of 'Pamela,' I spoke in my turn, and pointed out to the director that we had still new comedies to give, and that it was advisable not to gratify caprice too far at the expense of his interest.

This advice was attended to; and we gave the first representation of 'The Military Lover,' which I drew

from the knowledge acquired by me in the two wars of 1732 and 1740.

This comedy had every possible success, and was placed by the public in the class of happy pieces.

The next piece, however, rose still higher. The parts of Rosaura and Coralina were almost equal, and it was impossible to decide which of them was the most applauded. This was 'Le Donne Curiose,' or 'The Inquisitive Ladies;' a piece which, under a hidden title, represented a lodge of freemasons.

The piece was extremely applauded. The subject was easily recognized by the strangers who were present, and the Venetians said if the secret of freemasons had been guessed by Goldoni, it was unreasonable in Italy to prohibit their meetings.

With 'The Inquisitive Ladies' we closed the comic year; and this was the last piece of my engagement with Medebac.

I had composed three others beforehand lest he should be in want at any time; and I honestly gave them to him at the instant of our separation.

The first was 'La Gastalda,' a piece in three acts. La Gastalda is sometimes the female porter of a country-house; sometimes acts as gardener; at other times she is the wife of the bailiff: and at other times, again, has the charge of the poultry.

The second, entitled 'The Blunderer, or Imprudent Babbler,' a comedy in three acts, is a school without pretension, but of great utility for preventing the danger of imprudence and indiscreet talking; for Ottavio, a man of some merit and not devoid of talents, loses his fortune through his inconsiderate discourse, and his unlucky oversights.

The third, 'The Revengeful Woman,' a piece in three acts, was a slight revenge of the author himself against Coralina, who, piqued at my departure, and at the inutility of all her efforts to prevent it, vowed an eternal hatred against me.

I was kind enough to destine the character of the

Revengeful Woman for her: she did not, however, play it; but I was not displeased to have an opportunity of answering the violence of her rage, by a mild and respectful piece of pleasantry.

CHAPTER III.

I quit the theatre of Saint Angelo for that of Saint Luke—My new conditions—Folly of the husband of the principal actress—Ridiculous pretensions of Medebac and my bookseller—My journey to Tuscany—Florentine edition of my 'Theatre'—Prohibition of my edition at Venice—'The 'Jealous Miser,' a comedy of three acts, in prose—Its indifferent success—Observations of my adversaries—'The Silly Woman,' a comedy of three acts in prose—Its failure—Reflections on the fate of these two pieces—'The Persian Spouse,' a comedy in five acts, in verse, and without change of decorations—Its brilliant success—Infatuation of the husband of the principal actress—His rage and resolution—'Hircana at Julfa,' continuation of 'The Persian Spouse'—Its success—'Hircana at Ispahan,' conclusion of 'The Persian Spouse'—Its success.

I PASSED from the theatre of Saint Angelo to that of Saint Luke, where there was no director, but where the actors shared the receipts; and the proprietor of the house, who enjoyed the benefit of the boxes, paid their salaries in proportion to their merits, or the length of their services.

This patrician was the person with whom I had to act. I gave him my pieces, which were instantly paid for, before even being read. My emoluments were almost doubled; I enjoyed the full liberty of printing my works, and I was not obliged to follow the company to the continent. My situation was therefore become much more lucrative, and at the same time infinitely more honorable.

But what is there in this world without its disad-

vantages? The principal actress of the company was almost fifty. They had lately received a charming Florentine, but for second parts only; and I ran the risk of being obliged to give subordinate characters to this young woman, and those of lovers to the old actress.

Madame Gandini, the first actress, had the good sense to do herself justice; but her husband declared, in high terms, that he would not allow his wife to sustain the slightest injury; and the proprietor of the theatre, who had the right to decide, was afraid of discharging two old persons, to whom the company had been much indebted.

I spoke to M. Gandini in private, and asked him how long he thought his wife capable of enjoying her situation and her profits? "My wife," said he, "may yet shine on the stage for these ten years." "Very well," said I; "I am authorized by the proprietors to secure to madame Gandini her salary and her situation for the space of ten years. I engage, for my part, to bring her forward in characters calculated to gain applause; but then you must leave me at liberty to employ her as I please." "No, sir," he answered abruptly; "my wife is the principal actress, and I would rather be hanged than see her degraded." So saying, he turned his back to me in a rude and indecorous manner. I swore that I would be even with him; and you will see, in the third piece of this year, whether I kept my word.

The company were to pass the spring and summer at Leghorn, and I calculated on remaining at Venice, where my first object was to look after the edition of my works. The two first volumes had been published by Bettinelli the bookseller, and I was on the point of taking the manuscript of the third to him; but what was my astonishment when I was told by this phlegmatic man, with the most chilling indifference, that he could no longer receive any more copy from me; that he was to receive it from the hands of Medebac; and

that he was to continue the edition on account of this comedian!

On recovering from my surprise, and when my indignation was succeeded by a calm, "Take care, friend," said I to him, "you are not rich, and have children; do not ruin yourself, do not force me to ruin you." He persisted, however, in his resolution.

Bettinelli, whom I had too early, perhaps, allowed to receive the privilege of printing my works, had been gained over by money; and I had therefore to contend against the director, who contested the right of property of my pieces, and against the bookseller, who was empowered to publish them.

I should, without doubt, have gained my suit, but this would have required litigation, and chicanery is the same all the world over. I took the shortest method; for I went instantly to Florence, and commenced a new edition, leaving Medebac and Bettinelli at liberty to continue the one at Venice: but I published a prospectus which threw both of them into consternation; for I announced corrections and alterations.

I applied at Florence to a M. Paperini, a very respectable printer, and a worthy man. We concluded our agreement in two hours' time, and in the month of May 1753, we had the first volume in the press. This fortunate edition of ten volumes, octavo, by subscription, and at my expense, was extended to seventeen hundred copies; and on the publication of the sixth volume, it was completely filled up.

I had five hundred subscribers at Venice, and the entry of my edition was prohibited in the territories of the republic. This proscription of my works in my own country may appear singular; but it was a mere affair of commerce. Bettinelli had found protectors to secure to him his exclusive privilege, and the body of booksellers seconded him, because mine was a foreign edition.

Notwithstanding, however, this prohibition, and all the precautions of my adversaries, every time that one of my volumes issued from the press, five hundred copies were dispatched to Venice. An asylum for them had been found on the banks of the Po; a company of noble Venetians went in quest of the contraband commodity to the Venetian confines, introduced it into the capital, and made the distribution in open day; for the government would not interfere in an affair which was more ridiculous than interesting.

When I was at Florence, and my new company at Leghorn, I visited them occasionally, and put into the hands of the principal actress two comedies which I found leisure to compose, notwithstanding the fatiguing and assiduous attention which my edition required from me.

We all met at Venice in the beginning of the month of October, and the first new piece which we gave, was 'L'Avaro Geloso' ('The Jealous Miser.')

I drew the protagonist of this piece from nature. I became acquainted with his portrait and his history at Florence, where this man lived to the disgrace of humanity. He was charged with two vices equally odious, but which, from the contrast between his passions, placed him in highly comic situations.

It was very amusing to see a husband excessively jealous, receive a silver board with chocolate, a golden decanter with cordials, and afterwards torment his wife, whom he accused of having given some motives to her adorers to make these presents.

The infamy of this character is calculated to excite disgust; however, the piece would still have succeeded, but the actor to whom the part was intrusted, was exceedingly deformed, and in no estimation with the public.

I thought I acted properly in choosing, for a wicked character, a man who answered that description pretty well himself, and I imagined that his leanness, his ill looks, and his broken voice, would suit tolerably well

with the part. In this, however, I was much deceived. Some time afterwards I gave the same part to Rubini, who acted the Venetian characters; and the same piece, which completely failed at its debut, became afterwards one of the favourite pieces of that excellent actor.

My enemies, who were not sorry at the unfortunate issue of my first piece, and the partisans of the theatre of Saint Angelo, observed, with a sort of malicious joy, that I would repent having quitted a company to whom I was indebted for the success of my works. None of these observations gave me the smallest uneasiness. I was sure of silencing them with my third piece; but in the mean time I was in great apprehension for the second, which I was about to give. This was the 'Donna di testa Debole o la Vedova Infatuata' ('The Silly Woman, or Infatuated Widow.')

The piece fell at its first representations, as I had foreseen; and I unfortunately saw my prognostication too well verified.

I perceived when it was too late the circumstances which were unfavourable for me and my comedians. They were not yet sufficiently instructed in the new method necessary for my comedies: I had not yet had time to infuse into them the taste, tone, or natural and expressive manner which distinguished the actors of the theatre of Saint Angelo.

Another circumstance was still more remarkable. The theatre of Saint Luke was much larger, and from that circumstance, everything simple and delicate in action, everything refined, agreeable, and truly comic, lost much of its attraction.

It was natural to suppose that the public in time would reconcile themselves to the situation, and listen with more attention to regular and natural pieces; but it was requisite to make a strong impression at first by vigorous subjects, by actions which, without being gigantic, rose above the level of ordinary comedy.

This was my first project; but the publication of my works did not leave me the master of my wishes, and it was not till my third piece, that I made the requisite effort of imagination to install myself with honour in the new theatre where I had to carry through reform and support my reputation.

Having this object in view, I looked out for a subject capable of supplyiug me with comic and interesting situations, and showy exhibitions.

I had perused the modern history of Salmon, translated from the English into Italian: but I did not find there the fable which forms the subject of my piece. In that instructive work, however, I acquired information respecting the laws, manners, and customs of the Persians; and from the details of the English author, I composed a comedy entitled 'La Sposa Persiana' ('The Persian Spouse.')

The subject of this piece is not heroic: a rich financier of Ispahan, of the name of Machmout, engages and forces Thamas, his son, to marry against his will, Fatima, the daughter of Osman, an officer of rank in the army of the Sophi. This is what we every day see in our pieces; a young lady betrothed to a young man whose heart is already pre-occupied.

However, the names of Fatima, Machmout, and Thamas, began to lead the public to expect something extraordinary; and the saloon of the financier furnished with a sofa and cushions in the Mahometan style, and the dresses and turbans in the oriental costume, announced a strange nation, and whatever is strange, naturally excites curiosity.

But what removed this Asiatic piece still farther from a level with our ordinary comedies was, that in the house of Machmout, there was a seraglio for himself and another for his son; an arrangement very different from our European customs, where the father and son may have more mistresses than they have in Persia, but no seraglio.

Thamas had in his a Circassian slave of the name of

Hircana, to whom he was tenderly attached, and who, notwithstanding her servitude, proudly refused to allow her lover and master to share her favours with other women, not even with the one his father destined for his spouse.

This is still something new for our climates; for in France, as well as Italy, a mistress would make no opposition to her friend's forming a respectable and proper connection, provided he continued to see her, or secured her an income by way of consolation in her affliction.

This comedy was highly successful, and was represented so long, that some curious individuals had time to transcribe it, and it appeared in print without a date some time afterwards.

I owed the flattering reception of this piece to madame Bresciani, who acted the character of Hircana, and for whom I had conceived and executed it. Gandini would not allow the prerogatives of his wife to be encroached on; and this would have been all very well, if madame Gandini had not been on the verge of fifty; but to avoid disputes, I gave a character to the second actress, greatly superior to that of the first.

I was highly recompensed for my pains; for it was impossible to represent a strong and interesting passion with more force, energy, and truth, than was displayed by madame Bresciani in this important character.

This actress, who, to her talents and information, added the advantage of a sonorous voice, and a charming pronunciation, produced such an impresssion in this fortunate comedy, that she always went afterwards by the name of Hircana.

The interest taken by the public in the character of Hircana, might lead to a suspicion that I had mistaken the title of the piece, or weakened the principal action. Fatima, however, is the protagonist, and Hircana the antagonist; but the illusion was not in unison with

this arrangement, and the slave of twenty-five triumphed over the spouse of fifty.

The public, always attached to the charming Circassian, was sorry to see her leave the stage with a sigh, and would have wished to know whither she went and what became of her. I was asked for the sequel to the Persian spouse, and yet it was not the spouse which interested the curious.

I should have willingly contented them, but could not. Gandini was piqued against the public and against me, whom he accused of having played him a cursed trick; for I had had, he said, the diabolical art to sacrifice his wife without his perceiving it.

It was not my intention to injure him. I merely wished to force him to accept the advantageous offer which I proposed to him, and I was in reality doing him a service, notwithstanding his brutality.

More obstinate than ever, this unreasonable man informed the proprietor of the theatre, that his wife would not act in the sequel to the Persian Spouse, of which he had heard. He met with a very unfavourable reception from his excellency Vendramini; and the comedian who could not give vent to his rage against his superior, took his watch to pieces, and threw it, as he left the house, against a glass door, which he broke.

But he did still worse than this; he went to the Saxon minister, who was in want of actors for king Augustus of Poland, and engaged himself and his wife for Dresden. Both of them immediately disappeared without the least notice. No one was disposed to regret them, and least of all myself; for by their departure I was left in perfect freedom to labour as I pleased, and I accordingly gratified my countrymen with the sequel which was so much desired by them.

I entitled the second piece on this subject, 'Hircana at Julfa.' Julfa, or Zulfa, is a town a league distant from Ispahan, and inhabited by a colony of Armenians, whom Schah-Abas invited into Persia for the advantage of trade.

Hircana, forced to leave Ispahan, forms the resolution of repairing to Julfa, where at last Thamas makes her an offer of his hand. Her joy is at its height. They are now both satisfied; and the public thanked me with reiterated applauses for having terminated the catastrophe of Hircana in a satisfactory manner.

But, next day, the very same public were asking if this spouse of Thamas was to be happy? if Machmout would pardon his son for all the displeasure he had caused him to experience? and if he would receive favourably a woman who had thrown his house into trouble and desolation? The novel, it was said, was greatly advanced, but not yet finished. I was aware of this also, and had foreseen the consequence so well, that I had a third piece quite arranged in my imagination, which I gave the following year under the title of 'Hircana at Ispahan.' This was so successful, that it greatly surpassed the two others, still possessing the same interest, and leaving nothing more to be desired by the friends of the Circassian.

This third Persian comedy did not make its appearance on the stage till a year after the second, and three years after the first; but I have placed them here in succession, that my readers may have a distinct view at once of the three different actions on the same subject. The success of the last was even greater, if possible, than that of the others.

CHAPTER IV.

'The Clever Waiting-Maid,' a comedy of three acts, in prose—Its indifferent success—'The English Philosopher,' a comedy of five acts, in verse, without change of decoration—Its brilliant success—'The Tender Mother,' a comedy of three acts, in prose—Its success—'The Cook-Maids,' a comedy of five acts, in verse—Letter from my brother—His arrival at Venice with his children—My illness at Modena—My fits of spleen at Milan—'The Country Excursion,' a piece of three acts, in prose—Its success—'The Strong-minded Woman,' a piece of five acts, in verse—Its fortunate success—'The Amiable Old Man,' a piece of three acts, in prose—Its failure—Malice of my adversaries—'The Citizen's Ball,' a piece of five acts, in verse—Admirable effect of this comedy.

I MUST return to the year 1753, from which I was induced to wander, that I might not interrupt the continuity of 'The Three Persians.'

After the first of these oriental pieces, I gave a low comedy, in three acts, and in prose, under the name of the 'Cameriera Brillante.' The adjective *brillante* is variously employed in Italy; it signifies in French, 'La Soubrette Femme d'Esprit' ('The Clever Waiting-Maid.')

The comedy was very gay, and very amusing, and highly applauded; but the verses of 'The Persian Spouse' had turned everybody's head. The public demanded verses: there was no alternative; and in the ensuing carnival, I gave 'Il Filosofo Inglese' ('The English Philosopher.')

The theatre represented a street in the city of London, with a coffee-house and a bookseller's shop.

At that time a translation of the English Spectator, a periodical work, was in the hands of everybody at Venice.

The women of Venice, who till then were no great

readers, began to relish that work, and to become philosophers. I was delighted to see criticism and instruction admitted to the toilets of my dear countrywomen, and this induced me to compose the piece in question.

I was disposed to satisfy the public, and satiate them with verse, but prose had also its partisans. Feeling the necessity of contenting the one without disgusting the others, I gave, for the amateurs of true comedy, 'La Madre Amorosa' ('The Tender Mother,') a piece in three acts, and in prose. It had the most marked success. The women were proud of the virtues of the Tender Mother; but there was not one of them, perhaps, who had the courage to imitate her.

We were not far from closing, and it was necessary to amuse and thank the public for the favour shown to the piece which had been given. This object would, I thought, be effected by 'Le Massaere' ('The Cook-maids,') a Venetian comedy. I gave it with confidence, and I had no reason to repent.

The subject of this piece is taken from the lowest order of civil society; but Nature, in every situation, exhibits interesting citizens, and faults which require to be corrected.

The piece in question is more amusing than instructive. The cook-maids of Venice have the incontestible privilege of enjoying a free day in the course of the carnival, which they spend in all manner of diversion; and the women in this situation would give up the best places rather than lose this privilege.

The most interesting parts of the play are the criticisms and scandal of the cooks respecting ill-regulated houses. The moral, which would make no impression on the maids, is, however, of great utility in correcting the mistresses.

In the beginning of the year 1754, I received a letter from my brother. For twelve years I had had no news of him; and he gave me then an account of himself from the battle of Veletri, in which he was present,

in the suite of the duke of Modena, to the day in which he thought proper to write to me.

This letter was dated from Rome, in which city he had married the widow of a lawyer, by whom he had two children; a boy of eight and a girl of five years of age. His wife was dead; he was tired of residing in a country where military men were neither useful nor held in estimation; and he was desirous of living beside his brother, and to present to him the two shoots of the family of Goldoni.

Far from being piqued at a silence and neglect of twelve years, I instantly felt an interest in these two children, who might perhaps stand in need of my assistance: I invited my brother to return to my house; I wrote to Rome, that he might be supplied with the money he stood in need of; and in the month of March of the same year, I embraced with real satisfaction this brother, whom I had always loved, and my niece and nephew, whom I adopted as my children.

My mother, who was still alive, felt a lively pleasure in seeing again a son whom she no longer reckoned among the living; and my wife, whose goodness and sweetness of disposition never varied, received these two children as her own, and took care of their education.

Surrounded with all that was most dear to me, and contented with the success of my works, I was one of the happiest men in the world; but I was, at the same time, extremely wearied. I was still suffering from the immense fatigue which I had undergone for the theatre of Saint Angelo; and the verses, to which I had unfortunately accustomed the public, cost me infinitely more trouble than prose.

My spleen began to attack me with more than usual violence. The new family, which I maintained in my house, rendered my health more than ever necessary to me, and the dread of losing it augmented my complaint. My attacks were as much of a physical as a moral nature. Sometimes my imagination was heated

by the effervescence of the bodily fluids, and sometimes the animal economy was deranged by apprehension. Our mind is so intimately connected with our body, that if it were not for reason, which belongs to the immortal soul, we should be mere machines.

In my present state I required exercise and amusement. I resolved on a short journey, and I took all my family with me.

On my arrival at Modena, I was attacked with a defluxion in my chest. Everybody was in an alarm for me, but I was nowise alarmed myself; and this is the way in which I have been all my life-time: possessing a great deal of courage when in danger, and suffering from ridiculous apprehensions when in good health.

I got rid of my indisposition, but I had no time for amusement. My comedians were at Milan, where I went to join them; having my wife, my brother, and his two children, always along with me. The expense nowise alarmed me, as my edition went on successfully, and money poured in upon me from all quarters. Money has never been long stationary with me.

'The Persian Spouse' had the same success at Milan as at Venice, and I was overwhelmed with praise, with offers of friendship, and presents. My health was improving, my spleen subsided, and I led a delicious life; but this state of happiness, prosperity, and tranquillity was not of long duration.

The company of the theatre of Saint Luke made an acquisition of an excellent actor, of the name of Angeleri, a native of Milan, who had a brother at the bar, and whose relatives were of great respectability in the middle class of that place.

This man was subject to fits of spleen, and I had several conversations with him at Venice on the extravagance of our malady.

I met with him on my arrival at Milan, and found him worse than ever. He was tormented between the desire of displaying the superiority of his talents,

and the shame of appearing on the theatre of his native place. He suffered infinitely from seeing his companions applauded, and having no share himself in the applause of the public. This spleen gained ground every day, and the conversations which we had together tended also to excite mine.

He yielded at length to the impulse of his genius, and exposed himself in public. He played with great applause, and, on returning behind the scenes, he dropped down dead.

The stage was empty; the actors did not make their appearance; the news gradually spread; and at last reached the box where I was. "O heavens! Angeleri dead! My companion in spleen!"—I rushed out like a madman, and proceeded without knowing where. I reached home without being conscious of the way I took. Everybody perceived my agitation; and when I was asked the cause of it, I cried out repeatedly, "Angeleri is dead!" and threw myself upon my bed.

My wife, who knew my disposition, endeavoured to tranquillize me, and advised me to be bled. I believe I should have done well to have followed her advice; but, in the midst of the phantoms which harassed me to a degree that almost suspended respiration, I was still sensible of my folly, and ashamed of having yielded to it.

Notwithstanding my endeavours to call reason to my assistance, the revolution was so violent, that I was seized with real illness, and my mind was more difficult to cure than my body.

Doctor Baronio, my physician, after frequently employing all the resources of his profession, cured me thoroughly one day by an advice which he gave me. "Consider your disease," said he, "in the light of a child who comes forward to attack you with a drawn sword—If you be on your guard, he cannot hurt you; but if you lay open your breast to him, the child will kill you!"

This apologue restored me to health, and I have

never forgotten it. I have found its use in every stage of my life; for this cursed child sometimes threatens me yet, and it costs me some efforts to disarm him.

During the progress of my recovery at Modena, and in the intervals of my fits at Milan, I never lost sight of my theatre. I returned to Venice with a sufficiency of materials for the year 1754; and our theatre opened with a piece called, 'La Villegiatura' ('The Country Excursion.')

I had observed, in my journey, a number of country houses along the banks of the Brenta, where all the pomp of luxury was displayed.

In former times, our ancestors frequented these spots for the sole purpose of collecting their property, and their descendants go there merely to spend theirs. In the country they keep open table, play high, give balls and theatrical entertainments, and the Italian cicisbeo system is there indulged without disguise or constraint, and gains more ground than elsewhere.

I gave a view of all these circumstances shortly afterwards in three consecutive pieces.

In the first there is no interest; but the details of a gallant nature are very amusing, and the variety of characters introduced gives rise to incidents and dialogues of a highly comic nature, and furnishes an opportunity for the display of much just and entertaining criticism. My object was seen through and applauded, and the piece, though in prose, met with more success than I could have imagined.

I was aware, however, of the impropriety of abusing the indulgence of the public, and I gave shortly afterwards another piece in five acts, and in verse, entitled, 'La Donna Forte' ('The Strong-minded Woman.')—Strength is not the character, however, of this play; but it is nevertheless calculated, in many respects, to serve as an example for others.

It met with great success, and I have been assured by connoisseurs, that it would have succeeded as well in prose as in verse; for the substance, the progress,

the intrigue, the moral, everything in short, in their opinion, was good, and the denouement better than all the rest.

With this play we closed the autumn, and I prepared for the carnival a comedy in prose, the subject of which did not appear to me adapted for verse. I allude to the 'Vecchio Bizzarro:' this word, *bizzarro*, sometimes in Italian has the signification of the French word *bizarre*, and means capricious, fantastical, and even extravagant; but it is much more frequently used to express what is gay, amusing, and brilliant; and the best translation for my 'Vecchio Bizzarro,' is, 'The Amiable Old Man.'

I recollected the 'Cortesan Veneziano,' given by me fifteen years before to the theatre of Saint Samuel, and represented by Golinetti with so much applause; and I was desirous of composing a piece in the same style for Rubini, who acted pantaloon in the theatre of Saint Luke.

But Golinetti was a young man, and Rubini fifty at the least; and as I wished to bring him forward in this piece without a mask, it was necessary to adapt the character to his age.

Those men who have been amiable in their youth, are proportionably so in their old age; and of this Rubini himself was a proof; for he was as agreeable on the stage as delightful in company.

I expected that this play would at least be equally successful with 'The Cortesan;' but in this expectation I was sadly deceived. Rubini, who had never appeared without a mask, was so constrained and embarrassed in his acting, that he displayed neither grace, nor art, nor common sense. The piece fell in the most cruel and humiliating manner for both himself and me: it was with the greatest difficulty that it was allowed to go on to the conclusion, and when the curtain was lowered, nothing but hisses were to be heard.

I escaped with all possible expedition from the

theatre, to avoid disagreeable compliments, and repaired to the Ridotto. I mixed, concealed beneath my mask, in the crowd which assembles there on leaving the theatres, and I had sufficient time and opportunity to hear the eulogies with which both myself and my piece were honoured.

I went from one gaming-table to another, and I found myself the universal subject of conversation.—"Goldoni is done," said some; "Goldoni has emptied his bag," said others. I recognized a nasal voice which proceeded from a mask, and declared aloud, that "the portfolio was exhausted."—He was asked, what portfolio he alluded to?—"The manuscript," said he, "from which Goldoni has drawn everything that he has yet produced." Notwithstanding the desire which everyone seemed to have to laugh at my expense, this declaration of the nasal mask turned the current of ridicule completely against himself. I sought for criticism, but I could hear only the effusions of ignorance and animosity.

On returning home, I passed the night in meditating on the means of being revenged on my ill-natured critics. I was at length successful, and at break of day I began a comedy of five acts, and in verse, entitled 'Il Festino' ('The Citizen's Ball.')

I sent it, act by act, to the copyist. The comedians got off their parts in proportion as the work proceeded: on the fourteenth day the play was advertised; and on the fifteenth it was acted. It was a complete exemplification of the axiom "Facit indignatio versus."

This piece was still founded on the cicisbeo system.—A husband forces his wife to give a ball to her cicisbeo. I contrived to have in a saloon adjoining the ball-room an assembly of fatigued dancers.

I turned the conversation to the 'Vecchio Bizzarro'—I repeated all the ridiculous things which I heard at the Ridotto; I kept up a dispute for and against the piece and the author, and my defence met with the approbation and applause of the public.

In this manner I gave a proof that my "bag was not empty," and that my "portfolio was not exhausted."

Listen to me, my fellow-labourers; we have no other means of being revenged on the public, but by compelling them to applaud us.

CHAPTER V.

New edition of my works under the title of 'New Theatre of M. Goldoni'—My journey to Bologna—Disagreeable adventure at the bridge of Lago-Scuro—Generosity of a Custom-house officer—Complaints of the Bolognese on the subject of my reform—Observations on the four masks of the Italian comedy, and on sketched pieces—Other complaints of the Bolognese against my reform—'Terence,' a comedy in five acts, and in verse—Its brilliant success—My return to Venice—Charming country party—I am induced to act—I perform the Lover very ill—I succeed in exaggerated characters—'The Merry Gentleman,' a comedy in five acts, and in verse—My judgment of that work.

Amidst my several daily occupations, I never lost sight of the impression of my works. In my Florence edition, I had published the pieces composed by me for the theatres of Saint Samuel and Saint Angelo; and I began now to send to the press the productions of the two first years of my new engagement with that of Saint Luke.

This edition in octavo, under the title of 'New Theatre of M. Goldoni,' was undertaken by Pitteri, a bookseller of Venice. I supplied him with sufficient materials for six months, and then went to join my comedians, who were passing the spring at Bologna.

On arriving at the Bridge of Lago-Scuro, a league from Ferrara, where certain duties are demanded, I

forgot to submit my trunk to an examination, and I was taken into custody on leaving the village.

I had a small store of chocolate, coffee, and tapers. These were contraband commodities, and liable to confiscation. This subjected me to a considerable fine; and in the dominions of the church the revenue-officers are by no means lenient.

The custom-house officer, who had peace-officers along with him, on searching my trunk, found several volumes of my comedies, which he extolled as highly delightful. He acted himself in private parties. On my naming myself, he was surprised, enchanted, and kindly disposed towards me; and he gave me reason to entertain the most favourable hopes.

Had he been alone, he would have set me instantly at liberty; but as it was, the guards would not have consented to lose their dues. The officer ordered my trunk to be packed up again, and took me with him to the custom-house. The director of the customs was not there: my protector went himself to Ferrara in quest of him; and he returned in three hours' time with an order for my liberation, on paying a small sum of duty for my provisions. I wished to recompence the officer for the service he had rendered me; but he refused two sequins which I requested him to accept, and even my chocolate, which I offered to share with him.

All I could do, therefore, was to thank and admire him: I wrote his name down in my memorandum-book; I promised him a copy of my new edition, an offer which he accepted with gratitude, and I entered my chaise, resumed my journey, and arrived in the evening at Bologna.

In this city, the mother of science, and the Athens of Italy, complaints had been made some years before of my reformation, as having a tendency to suppress the four masks of the Italian comedy.

This sort of comedy was in greater estimation at Bologna than elsewhere. There were several persons

of merit in that place, who took a delight in composing outlines of pieces, which were very well represented there by citizens of great ability, and the delight of their country.

The amateurs of the old comedy, on seeing the rapid progress of the new, declared everywhere that it was unworthy of an Italian to give a blow to a species of comedy in which Italy had attained great distinction, and which no other nation had ever yet been able to imitate.

But what made the greatest impression on the discontented, was the suppression of masks, which my system appeared to threaten. It was said, that these personages had for two centuries been the amusement of Italy, and that it ought not to be deprived of a species of comic diversion which it had created and so well supported.

Before venturing to give any opinion on this subject, I imagine the reader will have no objection to listen for a few minutes to a short account of the origin, employment, and effects of these four masks.

Comedy, which in all ages has been the favourite entertainment of polished nations, shared the fate of the arts and sciences, and was buried under the ruins of the empire during the decay of letters.

The germ of comedy, however, was never altogether extinguished in the fertile bosom of Italy. Those who first endeavoured to bring about its revival, not finding, in an ignorant age, writers of sufficient skill, had the boldness to draw out plans, to distribute them into acts and scenes and to utter, extempore, the subjects, thoughts, and witticisms, which they had concerted among themselves.

Those who could read, (and neither the great nor the rich were of the number) finding that in the comedies of Plautus and Terence there were always duped fathers, debauched sons, enamoured girls, knavish servants, and mercenary maids; and running over the different districts of Italy, they took the fathers from

Venice and Bologna, the servants from Bergamo, and the lovers and waiting-maids from the dominions of Rome and Tuscany.

Written proofs are not to be expected of what took place in a time when writing was not in use; but I prove my assertion in this way:—Pantaloon has always been a Venetian, the doctor a Bolognese, and Brighella and Harlequin, Bergamasks; and from these places, therefore, the comic personages called the four masks of the Italian comedy, were taken by the players.

What I say on this subject is not altogether the creature of my imagination: I possess a manuscript of the fifteenth century, in very good preservation, and bound in parchment, containing a hundred and twenty subjects, or sketches of Italian pieces, called comedies of art, and of which the basis of the comic humour are always Pantaloon, a Venetian merchant; the Doctor, a Bolognese juris-consult, and Brighella and Harlequin, Bergamask valets, the first clever and sprightly, and the other a mere dolt. Their antiquity and their long existence indicate their origin.

With respect to their employment, Pantaloon and the Doctor, called by the Italians the two old men, represent the part of fathers, and the other parts where cloaks are worn.

The first is a merchant, because Venice in its ancient times was the richest and most extensively commercial country of Italy. He has always preserved the ancient Venetian costume; the black dress and the woollen bonnet are still worn in Venice; and the red under-waistcoat and breeches, cut out like drawers, with red stockings and slippers, are a most exact representation of the equipment of the first inhabitants of the Adriatic marshes. The beard, which was considered as an ornament in those remote ages, has been caricatured, and rendered ridiculous in subsequent periods.

The second old man, called the Doctor, was taken from among the lawyers, for the sake of opposing a learned man to a merchant; and Bologna was selected, because in that city there existed a university, which, notwithstanding the ignorance of the times, still preserved the offices and emoluments of the professors.

In the dress of the Doctor, we observe the ancient costume of the university and bar of Bologna, which is nearly the same at this day; and the idea of the singular mask which covers his face and nose, was taken from a wine stain which disfigured the countenance of a juris-consult in those times. This is a tradition still existing among the amateurs of the comedy of art.

Brighella and Harlequin, called in Italy the two Zani, were taken from Bergamo; because, the former being a very sharp fellow, and the other a stupid clown, these two extremes are only to be found among the lower orders of that part of the country.

Brighella represents an intriguing, deceitful, and knavish valet. His dress is a species of livery; his swarthy mask is a caricature of the colour of the inhabitants of those high mountains, tanned by the heat of the sun.

Some comedians, in this character, have taken the name of Fenocchio, Fiqueto, and Scapin; but they have always represented the same valet and the same Bergamask.

The harlequins have also assumed other names; they have been sometimes Tracagnins, Truffaldins, Gradelins, and Mezetins; but they have always been stupid Bergamasks. Their dress is an exact representation of that of a poor devil who has picked up pieces of stuffs of different colours to patch his dress; his hat corresponds with his mendicity, and the hare's tail with which it is ornamented is still common in the dress of the peasantry of Bergamo.

I have thus, I trust, sufficiently demonstrated the

origin and employment of the four masks of the Italian comedy; it now remains for me to mention the effects resulting from them.

The mask must always be very prejudicial to the action of the performer either in joy or sorrow; whether he be in love, cross, or good-humoured, the same features are always exhibited; and however he may gesticulate and vary the tone, he can never convey by the countenance, which is the interpreter of the heart, the different passions with which he is inwardly agitated.

The masks of the Greeks and Romans were a sort of speaking trumpets, invented for the purpose of conveying the sound through the vast extent of their amphitheatres. Passion and sentiment were not, in those times, carried to the pitch of delicacy now actually necessary. The actor must, in our days, possess a soul; and the soul under a mask is like a fire under ashes.

These were the reasons which induced me to endeavour the reform of the Italian theatre, and to supply the place of farces with comedies.

But the complaints became louder and louder; I was disgusted with the two parties, and I endeavoured to satisfy both; I undertook to produce a few pieces merely sketched, without ceasing to give comedies of character. I employed the masks in the former; and I displayed a more noble and interesting comic humour in the others; each participated in the species of pleasure with which they were most delighted; with time and patience I brought about a reconciliation between them; and I had the satisfaction, at length, to see myself authorised in following my own taste, which became, in a few years, the most general and prevailing in Italy.

I willingly pardoned the partisans of the comedians with masks the injuries they laid to my charge; for they were very able amateurs, who had

the merit of giving themselves an interest to sketched comedies.

I was most disgusted with those persons of quality, who called for vengeance against me for having ridiculed the cicisbeo system, and ventured to attack the nobility.

I was not desirous of excusing myself in this respect, and still less of correcting myself; but I entertained too high a value for the suffrage of the Bolognese, not to endeavour to convert the discontented, and to deserve their esteem.

I invented a comedy, the subject of which was worthy of a country where the arts, sciences, and literature, were more generally cultivated than elsewhere.

I selected for the subject of my piece Terence the African; as I had, several years before, selected the French Terence.

This comedy is one of my favourites; it cost me infinite labour, and procured me a great deal of satisfaction; it merited the general eulogium of the Bolognese; could I then possibly refrain to give it the preference?

Content with the success of my Terence, I returned to Venice, and passed the rest of the summer at Bagnoli, a superb estate in the district of Padua, belonging to count Widiman, a noble Venetian, and a feudatory in the imperial dominions.

This rich and generous nobleman was always accompanied by a numerous and select society. They represented plays, and he himself bore a part in them; and, notwithstanding his natural seriousness, there was not a harlequin of them all more gay and nimble than himself. He had studied Sacchi, and imitated him to admiration.

I supplied little sketches; but I durst not venture to play in them. Some ladies of the party obliged me to take the character of a lover; I satisfied them, and

thus enabled them to laugh, and enjoy themselves at my expense.

I was piqued; and next day I sketched a small piece, intitled 'The Fair;' and in place of one character for myself, I took four; a stage-doctor, a sharper, a stage-manager, and a ballad-monger.

In the first of these characters, I mimicked the jugglers of the square of Saint Mark; and I uttered under the mask of the fourth several allegorical and critical couplets, concluding with the complaint of the author against them for laughing at me.

This pleasantry was approved of; and thus I took my revenge in my own way.

I quitted the company of Bagnoli about the end of the month of September, and returned home, to be present at the opening of my theatre.

The first novelty we gave was 'Il Cavaliere Giocondo' ('The Merry Gentleman') a piece which I should perhaps have forgotten, if I had not seen it printed against my will in the edition of Turin: it was not damned outright at its first representation; it was in verse, and displeased nobody, but I myself was disgusted with it.

I should suppose the person intrusted with the correction of the press of the Turin edition was equally disgusted with myself at this comedy; for the errors which I have discovered in it can scarcely be credited. But let us here leave this poor unfortunate production, of which I shall be called, perhaps, by some an unnatural father; but I should speak of my children, if I had any, as I now speak of the productions of my brain.

After this piece in verse, I gave one which, notwithstanding the disadvantage of prose, pleased very much, and was eminently successful.

I gave three other pieces on the same subject; and the following are their titles.

'Le Smanie della Villegiatura' ('The Country Ma-

sia'); 'Le Avventure della Campagna' ('The Adventures of the Country'); and 'Il Ritorno della Campagna' ('The Return from the Country').

In Italy, and at Venice in a particular manner, this mania, these adventures, and regrets, furnish an abundance of ridiculous matter worthy of comedy.

It is hardly possible in France to have any idea of the extent of this fanaticism, which converts the country into a display of luxury rather than a scene of rural enjoyment.

Since I have been at Paris, however, I have seen people, who, without having an inch of ground to cultivate, kept up country-houses at a great expense, in which they ruined themselves, as well as the Italians; and my piece, in giving an idea of the folly of my countrymen, may admit of this incidental deduction, that in every country where people of moderate fortunes attempt to vie with the opulent, they will infallibly be ruined.

CHAPTER VI.

'The Peruvian,' a comedy of five acts, in verse—'A Droll Adventure,' a comedy of three acts, in prose—Its success—'The Woman of Importance,' a comedy of three acts, in prose—Its good fortune—'The Manager of the Smirna Opera,' a comedy of three acts, in prose—'The Good Housewives,' a Venetian comedy in five acts, and in verse—My journey to Parma—'The Good Daughter,' 'The Plebeian Ball,' and 'The Ridiculous Travellers,' three comic operas composed by order of his royal highness—The three musicians who composed the music—My return to Venice with a title and pension—'The Father from Affection,' a comedy in five acts, and in verse—'War,' a comedy in three acts, and in prose—'The Dutch Physician,' a comedy in three acts, and in prose.

The first play which I gave in the year 1755, was 'La Peruviana' ('The Peruvian'). The Peruvian Letter sare in everybody's hands: in following the novel, I brought together the principal objects; I endeavoured to imitate the simple and ingenuous style of Zilia in the original of madame de Graffigny; I wished to produce a romantic piece, and I had the good fortune to succeed.

This was followed by a comedy in prose, intitled 'Un Curioso Accidente' ('A Droll Adventure').

The story of the plot is true; this singular and droll adventure happened to a wealthy Dutch merchant, and it was communicated to me by two of his correspondents at Venice, as a fit subject for comedy.

I merely changed the scene of action, and disguised the names, and I drew the picture without attacking the originals.

This piece had the most complete success. The development is delicately conducted, and it is laboured in a very refined and agreeable manner. It contains scenes admitting of a double construction, which are

naturally produced and supported without effort: and it is still one of my favourite pieces.

But the following pleased still more; 'La Donna di Maneggio' ('The Woman of Importance'), a comedy of three acts, in prose.

After these pieces I gave one of a kind altogether different, 'L'Impresario di Smirna' ('The Director of the Opera at Smirna'), a comedy of three acts, which was in verse when I first gave it, and which pleases more in prose, as it now stands.

This piece was a very ample and very complete criticism on the insolence of actors and actresses, and the indolence of managers; and its success was most complete.

I finished the carnival of 1755, with a Venetian comedy intitled 'Le Donne de Casa Soa;' which signifies, in good Tuscan, 'Le Donne Casalinghi' ('The Good Housewives'). It succeeded to my utmost wish, and was highly applauded: and with it we closed the season in the most successful and brilliant manner.

The principal merit of this piece consists in the dialogue. The Venetians continually employ in their conversation, witticisms, comparisons, and proverbs, which cannot be translated, or but indifferently.

I composed this piece in Italy for the encouragement of good housewives, and the correction of bad ones. If a similar one were to be produced in France, it would perhaps be as useful at Paris as at Venice.

I was called to Parma in the month of March 1756, by order of his royal highness the infant Don Philip.

This prince, who maintained a very numerous and able French company, was also desirous of having an Italian comic-opera. He did me the honour to employ me in the composition of three pieces for the opening of this new entertainment.

On arriving at Parma, I was conducted to Colorno, where the court then was, and introduced to M. de Tillot, intendant-general of the house of his royal

highness, who was afterwards a minister of state, and advanced to the title of marquis de Felino.

This worthy Frenchman, full of intellect, talents, and probity, received me with kindness; gave me a very pretty apartment; destined me a seat at his table, and directed me to M. Jacobi, then entrusted with the management of the entertainments, for my instructions.

The same day I went to the court-comedy, and saw, for the first time, French actors. I was enchanted with their acting, and astonished at the silence which prevailed in the theatre. I do not recollect the name of the comedy which was that day represented; but on seeing, in one of the scenes, a lover warmly embrace his mistress, this action, which is natural and allowable to the French, but prohibited to the Italians, pleased me so much, that I called out, Bravo! as loud as I could.

My indiscreet and unknown voice shocked the silent assembly. The prince wished to know whence it came; I was named, and the surprise of an Italian author was considered pardonable. This sally was the means of my general introduction to the public. I went behind the scenes after the conclusion of the performance, where I was soon surrounded with people, and I thus formed a number of acquaintances, who made my residence in Parma very agreeable to me, and whom I regretted at parting.

I had the honour, some days afterwards, of kissing the hands of the infant, infanta, and the princess-royal, their daughter. I enjoyed for some time the pleasures of Colorno, and then retired to Parma, to labour without interruption.

I composed the three pieces for which I received orders; the first was 'La Buona Figliuola' ('The Good Daughter;') the second 'Il Festino' ('The Plebeian Ball;') and the third 'I Viaggiacoli Ridicoli' ('The Ridiculous Travellers.')

I took the subject of 'La Buona Figliuola' from my comedy of Pamela, and the music was composed by

M. Duni. The opera gave great satisfaction, and would have pleased still more, had it been better executed; but they had been too late in looking out for good actors.

'La Buona Figliuola' was more fortunate in the hands of M. Piccini, who being employed for a comic opera at Rome, several years afterwards, preferred this old drama to all the new ones offered to him.

M. Ferradini composed the music for the 'Festino;' and M. Mazzoni for 'I Viaggiacoli Ridicoli.' Both the musicians succeeded, and the two dramas were equally well received at the reading and the representation; but the efforts of the composers were insufficient to supply the deficiencies of the actors. In comic-operas, particularly, I have frequently seen indifferent works sustained by the goodness of the execution, and very rarely good works succeed when badly executed.

For my part my commission was very honourable and very fortunate. I was liberally recompensed for my time and my trouble; and I left Parma with letters-patent of poet, and actual servant of his royal highness, and with an annual pension which the reigning duke had the goodness to continue to me.

During my residence at Parma, I did not forget my comedians of Venice. I had seen 'Cenie,' a comedy of madame de Graffigny, represented by the French actors. The piece appeared to me charming, and I was induced to compose one from it in Italian, under the title of 'Il Padre per Amore' ('The Father from Affection.')

I followed the French authoress as closely as the Italian taste would permit in the imitation of a foreign composition. 'Cenie' was merely a very affecting and a very interesting drama, totally destitute of everything comic.

I contrived, however, by availing myself of an anecdote in the 'Recueil des Causes Célèbres,' to enliven the piece. Two noses of monstrous size, and resem-

filing one another in their deformity, were the means of occasioning a procedure, which for a long time puzzled both advocates and judges.

I gave one of these noses to the husband of the governante, and the other to the impostor who wished to supply his place; and those who are acquainted with 'Cenie' will be enabled to judge whether I have spoiled it, or rendered it more agreeable, without destroying the elevation or interest of the subject. The Italians did not discover the imitation; but I published it universally, believing myself highly honoured in sharing the public applause with a respectable woman, the boast of her nation and her sex.

The sight of Parma bringing to my recollection the battle which I was there a witness of in 1733, I composed, by way of varying my comedies, a piece intitled 'La Guerra' ('War.')

I had treated a subject nearly similar in the comedy of 'The Military Lover;' but I had still a great many things to say; and I dwelt much longer on it in this play than in the other.

The principal action is the siege of a fortress, and the scene is sometimes in the camp of the besiegers, and sometimes in the place besieged. I named neither the place nor the belligerent powers, that I might avoid displeasing the nation which should suppose itself hardly treated by me.

This work is rather comic than interesting. The picture of the armistice drawn from what I had been a spectator of at the siege of Pizzighetone affords a striking coup-d'œil, and diffuses a great deal of gaiety through the piece. There is a lame lieutenant, who, notwithstanding his crutches, attends every party of pleasure, fights like a paladin, and assails every woman in the neighbourhood.

I did not treat with too much leniency a commissary who advanced money to the officers at an interest proportionate to the dangers of war. I was wrong, perhaps, but I invented nothing. He was spoken of

and shown to me, and I introduced him on the boards without naming him.

The piece had no want of love intrigues. In the camp and in the town there was nothing but enterprising officers and families at loggerheads. Everything was adjusted at the peace, with which the comedy terminated.

This play met with tolerable success, and was represented till the end of autumn; but that which followed, and with which we opened the carnival, was much more fortunate and more profitable to the comedians, as well as flattering to the author. I mean 'Il Medico Olandese' ('The Dutch Physician.')

I formed an acquaintance with M. Duni at Colorno. Independently of his peculiar talent, he possessed a good intellect, and was well acquainted with literature. Like myself, he had been subject to hypochondria.

We took long walks together, and our conversations turned generally on our real or imaginary evils.

M. Duni told me one day, that he had been at Leyden in Holland, for the purpose of consulting the celebrated Boerhaave on the symptoms of his malady.

This man, so well known that he received letters from China, addressed to M. Boerhaave in Europe, was as well acquainted with the diseases of the mind, as those of the body; and the only prescription he gave the hypochondriacal musician was, to ride, amuse himself, and live in his ordinary manner, and to avoid all kinds of medicine.

This prescription seemed to me somewhat similar to that of my Milan physician, who cured me with the fable of the child. I praised the learned Dutchman; and Duni, who had seen him for several months, gave me a detailed description of his manners and way of living. He mentioned Miss Boerhaave, who was young, rich, and beautiful, and still unmarried.

From one thing to another, the discourse of my friend fell on the education of the Dutch ladies, who, always mindful of their duty, are left in the enjoy-

ment of a delightful liberty, and seldom marry unsuitably.

I listened attentively to him, and formed in my head the seeds of a comedy which soon shot upwards, with the assistance of a little reflection and moral philosophy.

I concealed the name of Boerhaave in my piece under that of Bainer, a Dutch physician and philosopher. I introduced to him a Pole afflicted with the same disease as that of Duni. Bainer treated him in the same manner; but at the end of the play the Pole married the daughter of the physician.

Duni saw my piece some time afterwards, and would have been gladly cured in the manner of the northern patient; but music is not so fortunate in Holland as at London and Paris.

CHAPTER VII.

Criticisms of my adversaries—Defence of my partisans—I am accused of violating the purity of the Tuscan language—Tasso experienced the same criticism—My comedy in five acts, in verse, intitled 'Torquato Tasso'—Notice respecting the dates of my comedies—'The Egotist,' a comedy of five acts, and in verse—A few words respecting this play—'The Beautiful Savage,' a comedy in five acts, and in verse—'Il Campiello,' a comedy in five acts, in blank verse—Its brilliant success—'The Good Family,' a comedy of three acts, in prose—Its indifferent reception—An acquaintance formed with madame du Boccage at Venice—A few words respecting this worthy lady and her works—'The Dalmatian Lady,' a comedy in five acts, and in verse—Its success—'The Clowns,' a Venetian comedy, in three acts, in prose—Its success—'Il Ricco Insidiato,' a comedy of three acts, in prose—Its success—'The Witty Widow,' a comedy of five acts, in verse, taken from the moral tales of Marmontel—A few words respecting this author—'The Housewife,' a comedy of three acts, in prose—'The Good-humoured Friends,' a Venetian piece, in five acts, and in verse—Its brilliant success.

My journey to Parma, and the pension and diploma conferred on me, excited the envy and rage of my adversaries.

They had reported at Venice, during my absence, that I was dead; and there was a monk who had even the temerity to say he had been at my funeral.

On arriving home safe and sound, the evil-disposed began to display their irritation at my good fortune. It was not the authors, my antagonists, who tormented me, but the partisans of the different theatres of Venice.

I was defended by literary men, who entertained a favourable opinion of me; and this gave rise to a warfare in which I was very innocently the victim of the

irritation which had been excited. My system has always been never to mention the names of my adversaries; but I cannot avoid expressing the honour which I feel in proclaiming those of my advocates.

Father Roberti, a Jesuit, at present the abbé Roberti, one of the most illustrious poets of the suppressed society, published a poem in blank verse, intitled 'Comedy;' and by dwelling on the reformation effected by me, and analyzing several scenes in my pieces, he encouraged his countrymen and mine to follow the example and the system of the Venetian author.

Count Verri, a Milanese, followed the abbé Roberti. He intitled his work the 'True Comedy.' He entered into a detail of those of my pieces which seemed to him the best; and held them out as models to be followed in completing the reformation of the Italian theatre.

'The Museum of Apollo,' a poem, in Martellian verse, by his excellency Nicholas Berengan, a noble Venetian, was still more considerable than the others. This work, which was well written, and enriched with learned notes, was highly relished by the public, and did me infinite honour.

Other patricians of Venice wrote in my favour, on account of the disputes which were every day growing warmer and warmer. Count Gaspar Gozzi, a literary man of great learning, and author of several Italian tragedies and comedies, also took my part, and honoured me by his poetry and his praise; and count Orasio Arrighi Landini, of Florence, deemed the works of the Venetian author worthy of his Tuscan muse.

Every day witnessed some new composition for or against me; but I had this advantage, that those who interested themselves for me, from their manners, their talents, and their reputation, were among the most prudent and distinguished men in Italy.

I must not forget to mention M. Stefano Sugliaga,

in Garmogliesi, of the city of Ragusa, at present royal and imperial secretary at Milan. This learned and worthy philosopher, and warm friend, whose heart and purse were always open to me, and whose talents and morals were in equal estimation, undertook to answer the satires published against me; and his vigorous and eloquent prose produced a greater effect than the tinsel verses and poetical imagery of my adversaries.

One of the articles for which I was most keenly attacked, was a violation of the purity of the language. I was a Venetian, and I had had the disadvantage of sucking in with my mother's milk the use of a very agreeable and seductive patois, which however was not Tuscan.

I learned by principle, and cultivated by reading, the language of the good Italian authors; but first impressions will return at times, notwithstanding every attention used in avoiding them.

I had undertaken a journey into Tuscany, where I remained for four years, with the view of becoming familiar with the language; and I printed the first edition of my works at Florence, under the eyes and the criticism of the learned of that place, that I might purify them from errors of language. All my precautions were insufficient to satisfy the rigorists: I always failed in one thing or other; and I was perpetually reproached with the original sin of Venetianism.

Amidst all this tedious trifling, I recollected one day, that Tasso had been worried his whole lifetime by the academicians della Crusca, who maintained that his 'Jerusalem Delivered' had not passed through the sieve, which is the emblem of their society.

I was then in my closet, and I turned my eyes towards the twelve quarto volumes of the works of that author, and exclaimed, "O heavens! must no one write in the Italian language, who has not been born in Tuscany?"

I turned up mechanically the five volumes of the dictionary de la Crusca, where I found more than six

hundred words, and a number of expressions, approved of by the academy, and rejected by the world: I ran over several ancient authors considered as classical, which it would be impossible to imitate in the present day without censure; and I came to this conclusion, that we must write in good Italian, but write at the same time so as to be understood in every corner of Italy. Tasso was therefore wrong in reforming his poem to please the academicians de la Crusca: his 'Jerusalem Delivered' is read by everybody, while nobody thinks of reading his 'Jerusalem Conquered.'

I lost much time in my observations and researches; but I endeavoured to turn my lost time to some account. I selected Tasso for the subject of a new comedy. I had brought both Molière and Terence on the stage; and I now projected the same thing with Tasso, who was no stranger to dramatic writing. His 'Aminta' is a chef d'œuvre; his 'Torrismonde' is a well-written tragedy; and his comedy of 'The Intrigues of Love,' though not an excellent work, displays always the touch of a man of genius.

The life of Tasso, in itself, furnishes interesting anecdotes for a theatrical work; and his love, which was the source of his misfortunes, forms the principal action of my comedy.

Everybody knows that Tasso was enamoured of the princess Eleonora, the sister of Alphonso d'Este, duke of Ferrara. The respect for that illustrious house, which is still entertained in Italy, induced me to change in my piece the rank of princess for that of a marchioness, the mistress of the duke, and attached to the princess.

At the court of Ferrara there were at that time two other Eleonoras; the one the wife of a courtier of the name of Don Guerard, and the other a waiting-maid of the marchioness. This anecdote I found in the dictionary of Moreri; and if the fact be not authentic enough for history, it is at least, in my opinion, sufficiently so for a comedy. It is by no means extraordi-

nary to meet with three persons of the same name in the same court in Italy, as the Italians are always called by their baptismal names.

This piece had such a general and constant success, that it was placed by the public voice in the rank, I will not say of my best, but of my most fortunate productions.

In continuing to give an account of my pieces for the year 1755, I find that the 'Amante di se Stesso' ('The Self-lover,' or 'The Egotist') belongs to this period, though, in a foreign edition, it bears the date of the year 1747; a time in which I wrote for the theatre of St Angelo, and three years before I began to employ verses in my comedies. I give the reader warning on this occasion not to rely on the dates of my printed works, for they are almost all incorrect.

This piece was successful enough, and may rank in the second class of my comedies.

A few days afterwards, I gave 'La Bella Selvaggia' ('The Beautiful Savage'); a piece, the plot of which is taken from the Travels of the abbé Prévôt.

It is a romantic piece. It had, however, an astonishing success. The interest was well sustained in it, and I contrived to find something comic on the banks of the river Amazons.

In the two pieces which I have been mentioning, there was more interest than amusement. It became necessary to enliven the scene, and I gave, towards the end of autumn, a Venetian comedy in blank verse, intitled 'Il Campiello.' This is one of those pieces which the Romans called *tabernaria* and which we should call *popular*, or *low*.

This 'Campiello,' which is the place of the scene, and is never changed, is surrounded by little houses, inhabited by the lower orders, where gaming, and dancing, and hubbub, take place. Sometimes it is the resort of gaiety, and sometimes the scene of disputes.

The 'Campiello' gave very great pleasure. The whole was taken from the lower orders, but the truth

of the picture was recognized by everybody; and high as well as low were satisfied with it; for I had accustomed my spectators to prefer simplicity to tinsel, and nature to the efforts of imagination.

To this gay piece a moral one, in prose, succeeded; the title of which was 'La Buona Famiglia' ('The Good Family.') This is, perhaps, the most useful comedy for society which I ever wrote: it was relished and applauded by sensible people, by well-regulated families, by wise fathers, and prudent mothers; but as the fortune of plays does not depend on this small class of men and women, it had but few representations, and was more frequently performed in private houses than in public theatres.

In the year 1757, I had the honour to form an acquaintance with madame du Boccage.

This Parisian Sappho, as amiable as learned, honoured my country at that time with her presence, and received the homage due to her talents and her modesty.

I owed this felicity to the noble Venetian Farsetti, who, inviting the imitatress of Milton to dinner, conceived a scholar of Molière not unworthy the society. This day is mentioned by madame du Boccage herself in her eighteenth letter in Italy.

Her mild and instructive conversation was a prelude for me of the satisfaction which I should one day derive from a residence in Paris, and her appearance immediately inspired me with the idea of a theatrical work, which succeeded admirably, and did me infinite honour.

I had read the 'Amazons' of madame du Boccage; I imagined a piece nearly of the same kind; but while she chose the heroines of the Termodonte for the subject of a tragedy, I made a courageous and sensible woman of Dalmatia the subject of a tragi-comedy, which I intitled 'La Dalmatina' ('The Dalmatian Lady.')

The Venetians have the highest esteem for the Dalmatians, who, being neighbours of the Turks, defend

their own property, and secure, at the same time, the rights of their sovereigns.

The republic derives its best troops from that nation: and I chose the heroine of my drama from among that courageous people.

The theatre was full of Dalmatians that day: they were so satisfied with me, that they loaded me with presents, and overpowered me with praise; but what flattered me most was the pleasure I conferred on my friend Scingliaga, who does honour to that illustrious nation.

After a piece of high comedy which had given great pleasure, I produced a Venetian one, which, far from being coldly received, was the means of filling our theatre all the rest of the autumn. The title of this comedy was 'I Rusteghi' ('The Clowns.')

Are you not, my dear reader, beginning to be fatigued with this immense collection of subjects of comedy? To tell you the truth, I feel wearied and fatigued myself; but I should fail in my engagement, if I did not render an account of all my works; and it would be impossible otherwise to distinguish, in going over the different editions of my Theatre, the pieces which really belong to me, and those which some editors have erroneously attributed to me.

Bear then, I beseech you, with this long catalogue, which, however, I shall dispatch with all possible brevity. Here is a good assortment of subjects.

'Il Ricco Insidiato' is a piece which was very much relished and applauded. Let me notice another which immediately followed it.

I had read, when at Parma, the 'Mercure de France,' which was then conducted by M. Marmontel; and this author, so well known in the republic of letters, and perpetual secretary to the French Academy, rendered the 'Mercure' very amusing by his moral tales, which abound in taste and imagination.

The 'Scrupule, ou l'Amour mécontent de lui-même,' was one of the tales which pleased me most; I believed

the subject might well be brought on the theatre; and I composed from it 'La Vedova Spiritosa' ('The Witty Widow,') which had the most brilliant and constant success.

The tales of Marmontel are in everybody's hands; and the one in question is to be found in the first volume of this valuable collection.

I shall not enlarge on the following piece, which, from its mediocrity, is altogether undeserving of any such notice; I mean the 'Donna di Governo' ('The Housewife.')

There is nothing so common, and at the same time so uninteresting, as a sort of mistresses resembling servants, who deceive their masters to maintain their lovers. The actress to whom the waiting-maid's part fell, and who was a good enough sort of person, imagined she was herself drawn in the character allotted to her; she had some reasons for thinking so; her ill-humour rendered her sluttish and ridiculous; and, whether from the defect of the subject or the execution, the piece fell at its first representation, and was instantly withdrawn.

The theatre was immediately afterwards indemnified by a Venetian comedy, 'I Morbinosi.' The word 'morbin,' in the Venetian language, signifies gaiety, amusement, a pleasure party; and 'I Morbinosi' may be translated into French, good-humoured people, people addicted to joy.

This piece was founded on fact: one of those merrily-disposed individuals proposed a pic-nic in a garden of the island de la Zueca, a short distance from Venice. He assembled together a society of a hundred and twenty, and I was of the number.

We all sat at the same table, which was plentifully served, and everything was conducted with the most admirable order and astonishing precision. He had no women at dinner, but a number arrived between the dessert and coffee. We had a charming ball, and we passed the night very agreeably.

The subject of this piece was only a fête; and it became necessary to enliven it by interesting anecdotes and comic characters. All these I found in our society; and, without offending any person, I endeavoured to avail myself of them.

The play was very much relished. I had, at its first representation, two or three hundred persons interested in applauding it: it could not fail of success, and with it we closed the year.

In the ensuing carnival, I received a letter from Rome. Count * * * having engaged to uphold the Tordinona theatre in that capital, fixed his eyes on me. He demanded from me pieces for his comedians, and invited me to repair to Rome to direct them.

I had never yet visited Rome; and the conditions proposed to me were highly honourable. Could I refuse so favourable and advantageous an opportunity?

I could not engage myself, however, without an avowal to the patrician who confided to me the interests of his theatre at Venice. I imparted the project to him, and assured him that I would not fail to supply his comedians with novelties. He readily gave his consent, and even displayed great satisfaction on the occasion.

I accepted the invitation accordingly, and demanded information respecting the construction of the Tordinona theatre, and the actors who were to perform in it.

The person who corresponded with me gave me no information on these two points, which appeared to me of some importance: he supposed that, on arriving at Rome, I could blow comedies as glasses are blown in a manufactory; and he merely informed me that he had taken care to have handsome apartments for me in the best quarter of Rome, in the house of a very polite and very worthy abbé, who, from his knowledge would be able to render my residence in Rome highly agreeable and interesting.

I accepted the proposition; and being precluded from labouring for the Roman actors, of whom I knew nothing, I employed my time for the comedians of Venice.

CHAPTER VIII.

Second letter from Rome—My departure for that city with my wife—View of Loretto—Some observations on that sanctuary and its wealth—My arrival at Rome—Interview with count *** and his actors—My first visit to the cardinal nephew—My presentation to the holy father—My blunder—Generous offer of cardinal Porto-Carrero and the Venetian ambassador—A few words respecting the holy father at Rome—Character of my landlord—His attention towards me—First representation of 'The Witty Widow'—Bad prelude—Failure of that piece—Buranello, a famous musician, is unsuccessful the same day at the theatre of Aliberti—Singularity of the pit of Rome—My new arrangement with count ***—Success of my pieces at the Capranica theatre—'Pamela Married,' a comedy of three acts, in prose, composed for the actors of that theatre.

I KNEW that for some years my comedies had been represented at the Capranica theatre, and that they were applauded there as well as at Venice.

I was, therefore, about to combat against myself, and I was desirous of acting in such a manner that my presence, and the care bestowed by me, should incline the public in favour of the new theatre, which was to open under my direction.

I had never hazarded my works without knowing the actors by whom they were to be represented; and I wrote again for instruction respecting the character and the aptitude of the comedians who were destined for me.

I was informed in answer, that count *** was himself unacquainted with the actors, the greatest part of whom were Neapolitans, who would not make their appearance in Rome till the latter end of the month of November.

In the same letter I learned that the count did not demand new pieces from me, that I might bring with me those which I had lately composed for Venice; that I should see and examine the company myself, and that in the space of a month the theatre might be opened.

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His holiness touched a bell on his table, which was the signal for my departure. I took my leave with many bows and expressions of thanks; but the holy father did not seem satisfied: he moved his feet and hands, coughed, and looked at me, yet said nothing. What a blunder I had committed! Enchanted and overpowered with the honour conferred on me, I had forgotten to kiss the foot of the successor of Saint Peter. I recovered at length from my absence, and prostrated myself. Clement XIII loaded me with benedictions, and I departed mortified at my stupidity and edified by his indulgence.

I continued my visits for several days. Cardinal Porto Carrero made me an offer of his table and the use of his coach. The same offer was made me by the chevalier Carrero, the Venetian ambassador, and I availed myself of the offers, and particularly of the carriages, which are as necessary at Rome as at Paris.

I saw every day cardinals, princes, princesses, and foreign ministers; and immediately after my reception I was visited, next day, by valets who came to compliment me on my arrival, and to whom it was necessary to give from three to ten paoli according to the rank of their masters, and to those of the pope three sequins. This is the custom of the country; the sum is fixed, and there is no abatement.

In the course of my visits I did not fail to examine the precious monuments of that city, formerly the capital of the world, and now the principal seat of the catholic religion.

I shall not dwell on the chef-d'œuvres known to everybody, but shall confine myself to an expression of the effect produced on my mind and senses by the view of St Peter of Rome.

I was fifty-two when I first saw this temple; from the age of reason to that time, I had heard it spoken of with enthusiasm; I had read the historians and travellers by whom it is described in a suitable manner. I imagined, therefore, that on seeing it myself, my surprise would be diminished by anticipation; but it so happened that all the descriptions fell below the actual impression it made on me: and that everything which, when at a distance, appeared to me described with exaggeration, rose in grandeur when I actually viewed it. I am no connoisseur in architecture, and I shall not attempt to make a display of terms of art to explain the cause of the delight which I felt; but I am certain that it was the effect of the accuracy of proportion displayed throughout such an immense extent.

If the objects of construction and ornament excite our admiration, the sanctuary of that church is in an equal degree productive of devotion.

The bodies of Saint Peter and Saint Paul repose in the vaults of the chief altar; and the Romans, who are everything but devout, never fail to appear there frequently in testimony of their veneration for the princes of the apostles.

My landlord, for example, would not have failed, for all the gold in the world, to attend prayers every day in the cathedral. He was fond of pleasure, and on returning home, as late as midnight, he would recollect that he had not visited his patrons. He lived in a quarter of the town at a great distance from Saint Peter; but that did not signify: he always went, and, after prayers at the door, returned home satisfied.

I must introduce this man to my readers, who possessed some singularities, but who had an excellent heart and was unequalled in sincerity.

He was the abbé * * *, the correspondent of several

German bishops on datary business; he furnished me with a suite of apartments consisting of four rooms with eight windows in front, looking into the Corso, the finest street in Rome, where everybody assembled to see the races of Barbary horses, and to enjoy the masks in Shrovetide.

The abbé * * * had a wife and a charming daughter; he was not rich, but he kept good cheer, and I boarded with him. There was every day on his table a dish made by himself, and which he never failed to announce to his guests as a dish for the advocate Goldoni, dressed by the hands of his servant * * *; adding, that nobody should touch it without the advocate's permission.

He gave concerts: miss * * * sung delightfully, and she was seconded by voices and instruments of the first merit, which in Rome may be found in abundance in all classes and all ranks.

These parties of pleasure were always, according to the account of my dear abbé, ordered for the advocate Goldoni, and I could not vex him more than by dining out or passing the evening in any other house.

One day, when I came home to tell him that I had engaged to dine out, he wished himself at the devil and scolded my wife: "Nobody shall eat," said he, "of the dish which I prepared for the advocate Goldoni." He then entered his kitchen, and looking with a distressed air at the delicious dish which he had taken so much pleasure in preparing, he was at last seized with a fit of rage and threw the stew-pan into the court. On my return home in the evening, the abbé was in bed and refused to see me. Everybody laughed, but I felt very uneasy: however, the servant at that instant having delivered me an invitation to go next day to the rehearsal of my piece, and that interesting me considerably more than the other circumstance, I soon forgot the abbé, and slept very tranquilly.

I repaired to count ****'s to be present at the re-

hearsal of my piece. The comedians were there: they had studied their parts, and got them by heart. I was flattered by their attention, and I resolved to second their zeal and give them all the assistance in my power. They began; donna Placida and donna Luigia; these female parts were acted by two young Romans, a journeyman barber and a journeyman carpenter.

Good heaven! what extravagant declamation! what awkward gestures! No truth—no intelligence. I ventured to speak in general terms of the bad taste of their mode of declamation. Punch, who was always the orator of this company, replied very briskly, "Every one has his manner, sir, and this happens to be ours."

I formed my resolution in silence: I merely observed to them that the piece appeared to me to be too long, and this was the only point in which we were agreed. I abridged it at least a good third, to spare me the trouble of hearing it; and, tiresome as the task was, I was present at every one of the rehearsals, even at the last one in the theatre.

All the theatres are opened in Rome on the same day, the 26th of December.—I was tempted not to go, but the count had destined me a place in his box and I could not decently refuse to be present.

I went accordingly, and found the house fully lighted and the curtain about to be drawn. There were, at most, not more than a hundred persons in the boxes and thirty in the pit. I had been informed beforehand that the Tordinona theatre was the resort of coal-heavers and sailors, and that, without Punch, none of the lovers of farce would attend. Still, however, I was inclined to believe that an author sent for expressly from Venice would excite curiosity and attract spectators from the centre of the town; but my actors were sufficiently known in Rome.

When the curtain was drawn the actors made their appearance, and played in the same manner as they had rehearsed. The public became impatient and asked for Punch, and the piece went on worse and

worse. I could bear it no longer; I began to feel myself growing unwell, and I asked the count's permission to withdraw, which he readily granted me, and even made me an offer of his coach. I quitted the theatre of Tordinona and went to join my wife, who was in that of Aliberti.

My wife, foreseeing the failure of my piece as well as myself, had gone to the opera with the daughter of my landlord. On my entering their box they perceived, by my countenance, the chagrin which I felt, without my having spoke to them.—"Console yourself," said the young lady to me, laughing, "things are not better here: the music does not please at all—there is not one agreeable air, recitative, or ritornello; Buranello has sadly forgot himself this time."—She was skilled in music and capable of judging for herself; and I saw that everybody there was of her opinion.

The pit of Rome is dreadful; the abbés decide in a vigorous and noisy manner; there are no guards or police; and hisses, cries, laughter, and invectives, resound from all quarters of the house.

But it must be owned that he who pleases the churchmen, may deem himself fortunate. I was at the first representation of the 'Ciccio of Mayo' in the same theatre, and the applauses were as violent as the censures had formerly been. A part of the pit went out at the close of the entertainment, to conduct the musician home in triumph, and the remainder of the audience staid in the theatre, calling out without intermission, *Viva Mayo!* till every candle was burnt to the socket.

What would have become of me, had I remained at Tordinona till the conclusion of my piece? I trembled when I thought of this. I called on count * * * next day, fully determined never to expose myself again to a similar danger. Fortunately I had to do with a just and reasonable man, who himself saw the impossibility of deriving any advantage from his comedians without

allowing them to proceed in their own way. I shall state, in a few words, the arrangement to which we were obliged to have recourse.

It was agreed that the Neapolitans should give their usual sketches diversified with musical interludes, the subjects of which I should arrange from parodied airs; and this project was in a few days carried into execution. We found the best scores of my comic operas in the music shops.

Rome is a nursery of singers. We procured two good, and six tolerable ones. The first interlude we gave was 'Arcifanfano Re di Pazzi,' the music by Buranello. This little spectacle afforded great pleasure, and the theatre of Tordinona succeeded in a way that prevented the count from being a great loser.

I had failed in Tordinona, and this was a mortifying chagrin for me; but I was indemnified by the actors of Capranica. This theatre, which for several years had devoted itself to my pieces, was then acting the comedy of 'Pamela.' The play was so well acted, and afforded such pleasure, that it alone supported the theatre from its opening to the close, that is, from the 26th of December to Shrove Tuesday.

Every time that I went was a new triumph for me. The actors of Capranica, whom I had extolled to the skies because they were deserving of it, entreated me to have the goodness to compose a piece for their theatre.

They were in no want of a comedy from me, because they had all those which I printed every year to choose from; but it was a kindness they wished to show me by way of gratitude, for the profits which they had derived from my works.

I consented to gratify their desire without appearing to have any idea of their intention. I asked them if they had any subject to give me which might be agreeable to them. They proposed the continuation of 'Pamela.' I promised to furnish them with it before

my departure: I kept my word and they were satisfied; I was not less so with the noble and generous manner in which they recompensed me for my trouble.

This comedy appears in the collection of my works under the title of 'Pamela Maritata.'

I did not witness the representation of this piece; I learned, however, that its success was less brilliant than that of the preceding part of 'Pamela,' and this did not astonish me. There was more study and refinement in the second, and more interest and action in the first. The one was adapted for the theatre and the other for the closet.

I beg pardon of those who commissioned it, if I disappointed them in their views. I gave them the choice of their subject, and I cannot reproach myself with having neglected it.

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In the course of my visits I did not fail to examine the precious monuments of that city, formerly the capital of the world, and now the principal seat of the catholic religion.

When I was preparing to leave Venice for Rome I imparted my project to the minister of Parma, who procured me his royal highness's consent and sent me letters of recommendation for the Spanish ambassador.

I wrote to the same minister, acquainting him with my desire to go to Naples. No answer. I reiterated my application, and met with the same mortification. I knew that at that time the court of Parma was not on good terms with that of Naples; I therefore interpreted the silence of the minister as a refusal on the part of the prince, and I did not think proper to risk the loss of the good-will of my protector and master for the sake of a mere party of pleasure.

I saw at Rome, on St Peter's eve, the immense cupola lighted up, and the famous chandelier, which resembles a torrent of fire thrown up into the air by the violence of a volcano. I saw also the ceremony of the host presented to the Holy Father by constable Colonna, in the name of the king of Naples.

The air of Rome now became dangerous. The Romans themselves are in dread of it, and the town is abandoned from the month of July to October.

I quitted Rome on the second of August, to the great regret of my host, from whom I experienced the greatest kindness. He never ceased to write to me, and he sent me every year Roman almanacks to the day of his death.

In returning to my country, I took the road through Tuscany, and I felt an infinite pleasure in seeing again that delightful country, where for four years I had been so agreeably occupied.

I saw nearly all my old friends. I turned off a little from my road to revisit Pisa, Leghorn, and Lucca. I began to bid adieu to Italy, without knowing that I was to quit it for ever.

On arriving at Venice, the first thing I did was to enquire after the success of my new pieces which had been acted during my absence.

Whilst at Rome, I received some accounts of them;

but they were all contradictory, and not sufficiently minute.

'La Sposa Sagace' ('The Shrewd Woman') was the first acted. I composed this comedy with great care, and I was glad to hear that it had answered my expectations.

La Sposa, in Italian, does not always mean a married woman. A girl promised in marriage, called bride in France, is called spouse at Venice.

The lady of my piece is in reality neither a bride nor a wife; but she imagines herself to be both, in consequence of a clandestine marriage contracted by her.

The piece was very gay and very amusing, and I was assured that it had been extremely successful.

The play given out after the above was 'Lo Spirito di Contradizione' ('The Spirit of Contradiction.')

I did not possess, when I was at Venice, that collection of French authors which is now the most interesting ornament of my little library; I was unacquainted with the 'Esprit de Contradiction' of Dufresny; but as this is one of the vices which is most inconvenient in society, I could not easily fail to light on it.

Since my coming to Paris I have read the piece of the French author, and compared it with mine. We have both of us treated the same subject, but our means are very different.

That of Dufresny consists of but one act, in prose; whereas mine is in five acts, and in verse. If I am not mistaken, there is in the play of Dufresny more art than nature, and in mine more nature than art. I wish my reader were able to compare them; he would see, perhaps, that I am right.

The third piece represented at Venice while I was at Rome was 'La Donna Sola' ('The Solitary Woman').

Madame Bresciani, who played the principal parts, and who enjoyed a degree of consideration which she

every way merited, was not without her faults. She was jealous of her companions, and could not bear another actress to be applauded.

This ridiculous feature in the character of madame Bresciani was unpleasant and troublesome to me; and I was in the habit of inflicting a gentle castigation on my actors when they chagrined me.

I composed a piece in which there was but one woman; and I wished to say, by the title and subject, to madame Bresciani, "You are desirous of being alone; now you have got your wish."

She was clever, and could easily see what my object was: but the piece was to her liking, and she willingly consented to do it all the justice in her power. The actress afforded much pleasure, and the piece was eminently successful.

These three comedies succeeded; but the fourth, 'La Buona Madre' ('The Good Mother') had not the same good fortune. I had already given 'The Good Daughter,' 'The Good Wife,' and 'The Good Family:' goodness never displeases; but the public weary of everything; and, though the subject be varied, they dislike the repetition of the same motives or similarity of characters.

'The Good Mother' was neither condemned nor applauded. It was coldly listened to, and went through only four representations. This was a respectable failure for a respectable piece.

The last piece with which the carnival of 1758 closed was successful to such a degree, that I was overpowered with letters, eulogies, and details without end, respecting it. By three successive couriers, I received letters enough to read and amuse myself with for a long time.

'Le Morbinose' was the title of this fortunate comedy. The preceding year I had given 'I Morbinosi,' which I mentioned in one of the foregoing chapters, where I explained the meaning of the Venetian term 'morbinosi.' The feminine is here employed, the word

serving either for a substantive or adjective; and le morbinose, in the Venetian language, means merely the gay women.

The scene is at Venice, and the characters are all Venetians, excepting one stranger, whose Tuscan language and foreign manners form a striking contrast with the idiom and manners of the Venetian nation.

This stranger, whose name is Ferdinand, is recommended to respectable citizens of Venice, and forms several acquaintances. He is well received in company; but the women of the place, who constitute the principal charm of the national gaiety, find the Tuscan heavy and affected, and they accordingly endeavour to turn him into ridicule. They avail themselves of the carnival to play tricks on him, for the sake of softening his natural stiffness, and giving him the easy ton of the Venetians; and they succeed so well, that M. Ferdinand becomes enamoured of one of the ladies, whom he marries, and with whom he settles at Venice.

I paid my court to the ladies of my country, but I was acting at the same time for my own interest; for if we wish to please the public, we must begin by flattering the ladies.

I had scarcely time to breathe when I was again summoned to labour. I arrived on the first day of September, and the theatre was to be opened on the fourth of the following month—I had done nothing yet.

I was too agreeably occupied at Rome to find leisure to write. I was laborious; but I have always been fond of pleasure, and, without losing sight of my engagements, I availed myself of my moments of liberty. I knew that I possessed great facility, and I always laboured with more ardour when I was limited in point of time.

It must also be owned, that time, experience, and habit, had so familiarized me with the art of comedy,

that, after inventing the subjects and selecting the characters, all the rest was mere routine for me.

At first I went through four operations before finishing the composition and correction of a piece.

First operation: the plan, with the division, three principal parts, the exposition, the intrigue, and the winding-up.

Second operation: the division of the action into acts and scenes.

Third: the dialogue of the most interesting scenes.

Fourth: the general dialogue of the whole of the piece.

It frequently happened that, in this last operation, I changed all that I had done in my second and third; for ideas succeed one another; one scene produces another; one chance expression furnishes a new thought. After some time I became enabled to reduce the four operations to one alone; having the plan and the three divisions in my head, I began at once, Act the First, Scene the First, and proceeded straight on to the conclusion, with this maxim always in view, that all the lines ought to terminate in a fixed point, that is, in the winding-up of the action which is the principal part for which all the machines are put in motion.

I have rarely been disappointed in my catastrophes. This I may boldly say, as it has been universally allowed, and the matter seems to me by no means attended with difficulty. It is very easy to have a fortunate winding-up, when it has been well prepared in the beginning of the piece, and never lost sight of in the course of the work.

I began then, and finished in fifteen days, a comedy of three acts, in prose, intitled, 'Gl' innamorati' ('The Lovers'). The title promised nothing new, for there are few plays without love; but I knew none where the lovers resemble those which I drew in this. Love would be the most dreadful scourge on the face of the

earth, were all lovers as impassioned and miserable as the two principal characters of my comedy.

I knew the originals, however, and had seen them at Rome, where I was the confidant of both. I was the witness of their passion and affection, and frequently of their fits of raving and ridiculous transports.

I had more than once witnessed their quarrels, cries, and desperation, with torn handkerchiefs, broken glasses, and knives drawn. My lovers are extravagant, but they are not the less true. I am willing to allow that there is more truth than probability in this work; but, from the certainty of the fact, I imagined it possible to represent a picture which should dispose some to laugh, and inspire others with fear.

Such a subject in France would not have been supportable. In Italy it was considered somewhat exaggerated, and I heard several persons of my acquaintance boast of having been nearly in the same situation. I was not wrong then in painting, in strong colours, the follies of love in a country where the heart and the head are more than anywhere else heated by the power of the climate.

After this piece, which was more successful than I could have expected, I gave another, which was infinitely more so, intitled 'La Casa Nova' ('The New House') a Venetian comedy. I had changed my lodgings, and as I was always on the look-out for subjects of comedy, I found one in the embarrassments of my removal. I did not derive the subject of my piece from my own case, but the circumstance suggested the title, and my imagination filled up the rest.

'La Casa Nova,' which contains the germ of the 'Bourra Bienfaisant,' was highly relished. With it we closed the autumn; and it has continued to remain in the class of pieces which constantly please, and appear always new on the theatre.

CHAPTER X.

'The Capricious Wife,' a comedy of five acts, in verse—Its success—'The Disputes of the People of Chiozza,' a comedy in three acts, and in prose—Its brilliant success—Plan of my Pasquali edition—Letter from a French author—I am called to Paris—The French ambassador receives orders for my departure—My reflections—I am forced to quit my country—My last pieces for Venice—'Theodore, the Grumbler,' a Venetian comedy of three acts, in prose—Its brilliant success—Extract from the 'Preface of the Scotch Woman,' in Vol. XIII of the Pasquali edition of my theatrical works—'The Evening in Shrove-tide,' the last piece given by me at Venice previous to my departure, a Venetian comedy of three acts, in prose—Its brilliant success—Five pieces which form a little private theatre; 'The Clever Man;' 'The Clever Woman;' 'The Man of Apathy;' 'The Stage Inn,' and 'The Miser'—I fall sick at Bologna—Presentation of my volumes to the courts of Parma and of the Landgrave of Hesse d'Armstadt—Meeting with our relations at Genoa—My embarkation with the French courier—Danger at sea—Whimsical dispute—I land at Nice—I cross the Var—Arrival in France.

With 'The Donna Stravagante' ('The Capricious Woman') we opened the carnival of 1760.

The principal character of the piece was so wicked, that the women would not have allowed it to be natural, and I was obliged, therefore, to say that it was pure invention.

This piece was pretty successful, and would have been more so, but madame Bresciani, whose natural disposition was a little capricious, imagined herself pourtrayed in it, and the work suffered from her ill humour.

I soon made reparation for my injuries towards this excellent actress. I composed a Venetian piece, intitled 'Le Baruffe Chiazzote' ('The Disputes of the People of Chiozza.') This low comedy produced an

admirable effect. Madame Bresciani, notwithstanding her Tuscan accent, had acquired the Venetian manners and pronunciation so well, that she afforded as much pleasure in low as in genteel comedy.

I had been coadjutor of the criminal chancellor at Chiozza in my youth; an office corresponding with that of substitute of the lieutenant-criminel. My situation brought me in contact with that numerous and tumultuous population of fishermen, sailors, and low women, whose only place of assemblage was the open street. I knew their manners, their singular language, their gaiety, and their malice; I was enabled to paint them accurately; and the capital, which is only eight leagues distant from that town, was perfectly well acquainted with my originals. The piece had the most brilliant success; and with it we closed the carnival.

On the Ash Wednesday following, I was at one of those spare suppers with which our Venetian epicures commence their Lent collations. We had every fish which the Adriatic Sea or the Lake di Garda could supply.

The conversation turned on plays, and the modesty of the author who was one of the guests was not spared. Wearied with hearing the same thing over and over again, and by way of putting a stop to compliments and eulogies without end, I imparted to the society a project which I had just conceived. The wine and other liquors had elevated the minds of the company; but they became instantly silent, and listened attentively to me.

It was a new edition of my 'Theatre' which I wished to speak to them about. I endeavoured to be as brief as possible; but I said enough to make my meaning understood.

I was applauded and encouraged, and paper and ink was sent for. The party was composed of eighteen individuals, without including myself; a subscription-paper was immediately drawn up; each individual

subscribed for ten copies; and by this manœuvre I procured a hundred and eighty subscriptions.

This was the origin of my Pasquali edition, of which I have spoken enough in the Preface to these Memoirs. I will not exhaust the reader's patience farther at present, but proceed to communicate a letter which I received some days afterwards from Ferney.

Perhaps you may imagine it was from M. de Voltaire? In that case you are mistaken. I have received several letters from that great and wonderful man; but at that time I had not the honour to correspond with him.

The letter of which I am speaking, was signed Poinsinet. I knew nothing of him, but he announced himself as an author. He spoke of several pieces composed by him for the comic-opera at Paris: he said he was on a visit to his friend, at Ferney, from whom he had instructions to mention a number of things; and he requested me to return an answer to him at Paris.

He wrote to me on the subject of a translation of all my theatrical works into French, which he had in contemplation. He asked me bluntly, and without any ceremony, for the manuscripts of my pieces not yet printed, and for the communication of any anecdotes respecting myself. I was at first induced to believe myself honoured in the wish expressed by a French author, to enter upon a translation of my works; but I could not help thinking his demands a little premature; and being personally unacquainted with him, I returned an answer, couched in respectful terms, but sufficient to dissuade him from his undertaking.

I informed M. Poinsinet, that I was engaged in a new edition, with corrections and alterations, and that my pièces were, besides, full of the different Italian dialects, which rendered it almost impossible for a stranger to execute a translation of my 'Theatre.'

I thought this sufficient: by no means; for I received a second letter from the same author, dated from

Paris: "I shall expect from you, sir, the changes and corrections which you propose to make in your new edition. With respect to the different Italian dialects, do not alarm yourself, I have a servant who has gone over all Italy, and can explain them to me to your satisfaction."

I was very highly offended at this proposal, and supposed that the French author was laughing at me. I went instantly to count de Baschi, the French ambassador at Venice, and communicated to him the two letters of M. de Poinsinet, requesting him to inform me what sort of a man he was.

I do not recollect what his excellency told me with respect to M. Poinsinet, but he delivered me a letter which he had received with the dispatches from his court. This was a very agreeable piece of news for me, and I shall proceed to give an account of it.

The letter delivered to me by the French ambassador, was from M. Zanuzzi, the principal actor of the Italian theatre at Paris. This man, equally respectable for his character and his talents, had carried with him, into France, the manuscript of my comedy, intitled 'Harlequin's Child Lost and Found.' This piece he had presented to his companions, by whom it was approved of and acted. It had given great pleasure, he told me, and had confirmed the reputation long enjoyed by my works in that country, where a desire was felt to have me.

M. Zanuzzi, after this introduction, informed me, that he was empowered by the principal gentlemen of the king's bed-chamber, intrusted with the regulation of theatrical entertainments, to offer me an engagement for two years, with an honourable salary.

Count Baschi described to me, at the same time, the eagerness which the duke d'Aumont, the first gentleman of the chamber on duty, displayed to procure me; and he added, that, in case of any difficulty, he would make a demand in form to the government of the republic.

For a long time I had been desirous of seeing Paris, and I was at first tempted to answer in the affirmative; but I did not feel myself exactly at liberty to follow my own inclination exclusively, and I demanded some time for consideration.

I was in the receipt of a pension from the duke of Parma, and I had an engagement at Venice. I was, therefore, under the necessity of asking the prince's permission, and obtaining the consent of the noble Venetian who was the proprietor of the theatre of Saint Luke. Neither of these I considered as difficult to obtain; but I loved my country, where I was cherished, caressed, and applauded. The criticisms against me had ceased, and I was in the enjoyment of a delightful tranquillity.

The engagement in France was only for two years; but I could easily see, that when once expatriated, I should find it very difficult to return. My situation was precarious, and required the exertion of painful and assiduous labours, and I trembled at the dreary days of old age, when our powers diminish and our wants increase.

I spoke to my friends and protectors at Venice. I explained to them that I did not look upon my journey to France in the light of a journey of mere pleasure, but that I was prompted to accept of it from the necessity of securing to myself an establishment.

I added, to those who seemed desirous of retaining me at Venice, that, as an advocate, I could pretend to every sort of employment, and even to a place in the magistracy; and I concluded my harangue with a sincere and decisive declaration, that, if they would undertake to secure me an establishment at Venice, either under the title of office or pension, I should prefer my country to the whole universe.

I was listened to with attention and interest. My reflections were approved of as just, and my behaviour considered respectful. Every one undertook to endeavour to satisfy me. Many meetings were held

on my account; and the following is the result of them.

In a republican state, favours are only granted by a majority of votes. Those who demand them must wait a long time before they can be ballotted; and with respect to pensions, when there is any competition, the useful arts are always preferred to agreeable talents. This was enough to determine me to renounce all expectations from this quarter.

I wrote to Parma, and obtained the desired permission. With a little effort I overcame the opposition of the proprietor of the theatre of St Luke; and when I was at full liberty, I engaged with the French ambassador, and wrote in consequence to M. Zanuzzi at Paris. It was but just, however, that I should allow my actors and their master time to provide themselves with an author, and I fixed my departure from Venice for the month of April 1761.

In that interval, I composed three pieces; the first of which was intitled 'Todaro Brontolon' ('Theodore the Grumbler') a Venetian comedy.

There was once an old man in Venice (I do not recollect when he lived) called Theodore; the most rude, ill-natured, and unpleasant man in the world; and he left behind him so admirable a reputation, that every grumbler at Venice is called Todaro Brontolon.

I knew one of those ill-natured old men who harassed his family, and his daughter-in-law in particular, a very pretty and amiable woman, whose husband trembled at the sight of his father, and rendered her still more unhappy.

I wished to avenge this worthy woman, whom I frequently saw. I drew in the same picture the portraits of her husband and father-in-law; she was in the secret, and enjoyed more than any one else the success of the piece; for the originals were recognized, and returned from the theatre, the one furious, and the other humiliated.

This piece afforded so much pleasure, that it was

continued to the close of the autumn of 1760; and I preserved for the opening of the carnival of 1761, the 'Scotch Woman,' a comedy which was not of my invention, but which was not productive of the less honour to me on that account.

An anecdote of an interesting nature, in my opinion, is connected with the history of this comedy. I cannot do better on this occasion, than extract part of the preface which stands before this work in my Pasquali edition.

Those who are in the habit of reading the daily news, will recollect that, in 1760, there appeared in Italy, as well as everywhere else, a French comedy, under the title of 'The Coffee-house, or the Scotch Woman.'

It was stated in the preface to this piece, that it was the work of M. Hume, minister of the church of Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland; but everybody knew that Voltaire was the author.

I was one of the first at Venice into whose hands it came: the illustrious Venetian patrician Andrea Memo, a man possessed of learning and taste, and deeply versed in literature, was charmed with this piece, and sent it to me under the idea that it might be of use to me for my theatre.

I read it attentively, and was infinitely pleased with it. I even found it to be of the kind of theatrical compositions which I had adopted, and self-love attached me still more to it, on discovering that the French author had done me the honour of naming me in his preliminary discourse.

I was seized with a strong desire of translating 'The Scotch Woman,' to enable my countrymen to relish it; but in reading the piece over again attentively, and making reflections respecting the object which I had in view, I discovered that it would not succeed in its then state on the Italian theatre.

It is true, as the author himself observes, that the work is calculated to please in every language, for it

paints nature, which is everywhere the same; but this nature is differently modified in different climates, and must be represented everywhere with the manners and customs of the country where the representation takes place.

My pieces, for example, which have been favourably received in Italy, would meet with a different reception in France, and considerable changes must be made before any of them would pass.

But I had promised that 'The Scotch Woman' should make its appearance on the theatre of St Luke, and considering an accurate translation as dangerous, I proposed to produce an imitation. I composed an Italian piece agreeably to the plot, character, and interest of the French original.

It was impossible for a comedy to be more successful than this. The French author and myself had each of us our share in the applause. It will be said, perhaps, that I assume a great deal in presuming to lay claim to a share of the honour awarded to 'The Scotch Woman,' from having given the piece an Italian dress. This reproach, which seems by no means ill-founded, lays me under the necessity of communicating to my readers a singular anecdote, which took place the same year, respecting that work.

All the three theatres of Venice brought it out, one after another. That of Medebac was the first; but 'The Scotch Woman' was concealed under the title of 'The Fair Pilgrim;' Lindane had the air of a female sharper; Friport, the English seaman, coarse from habit, and generous from character, was succeeded by a Venetian petit-maître; the piece was the same in the main, but the characters were changed, and there was neither dignity nor interest in the subject. The play was rewarded as it deserved; it was withdrawn after the third representation.

The theatre of St Samuel had also its 'Scotch Woman.' The piece was announced as the true and legitimate 'Scotch Woman,' translated word for word

from the original French. It was damned at the first representation.

I gave place to everybody, and mine appeared last. What a fortunate event for me! It was listened to with such attention, and applauded in such high terms, that if I had been susceptible of jealousy, I should have had a feeling of that sort for my own pieces.

The failure of the two other attempts rendered my success the more brilliant. It continued to enjoy the same high reputation, and was classed with my most agreeable productions.

It was known that the subject of the piece was not my own; but the art and care bestowed by me in assimilating it to our manners and customs were considered as equivalent to the merit of invention.

I shall not here specify all the changes made by me in 'The Scotch Woman.' Such a detail could only be interesting to the connoisseurs of the two languages, who may satisfy themselves much more amply by reading and comparing the same piece in the two idioms.

I beg the French author's pardon for presuming to touch his piece; but experience has shewn that it would not have been relished in Italy without this alteration; and this illustrious poet, who does such honour to his country, ought to set some value on the applause of mine.

The last piece which I produced at Venice before my departure, was 'Una delle ultime Sere di Carnovale' ('The Evening of Shrovetide') an allegorical Venetian comedy, in which I bade adieu to my country.

This piece was very successful; and with it we closed the comic year of 1761. The eve of Shrove Tuesday was the most brilliant for me; for the theatre echoed with applauses, amidst which was distinctly heard the cry of—a good journey—return again to us—do not fail. I own that I was affected, even to tears.

Here the collection of pieces composed by me for the Venetian public terminates; and the second part of my Memoirs ought to terminate here also; but I

cannot quit this part without giving an account of some pieces which are printed in my 'Theatre.'

These are comedies composed by me for the marquis Albergati Capacelli, a senator of Bologna. These pieces, which are much shorter than the others, formed a small private theatre; they are carefully laboured, and they succeeded very well. Some of them have even been successfully performed on public theatres. I shall notice them as briefly as possible.

'Il Cavaliere di Spirito' ('The Clever Gentleman') a comedy of five acts, and in verse. The chief personage is an amiable and well-informed young man, who is the delight of society. This was the portrait of the young senator, who himself played admirably the principal character of the piece.

'La Donna Bizzara' ('The Witty Woman') a comedy of five acts, and in verse. The subject of this is a young, pretty, and interesting widow, with great merit, who is spoiled by society, and, in endeavouring to be generally pleasing, renders herself ridiculous.

'L'Apatista' ('The Man of Apathy') a comedy of five acts, and in verse. The protagonist is a man of sang-froid, always calm, always consistent; one who enjoys happiness without transport, who suffers affliction without a murmur; one who defends himself when attacked without rage; and who at last coolly submits to the tie of marriage. I defy any actor to sustain this character with more zeal and fidelity than was displayed by the marquis Albergati in his representation of it.

'L'Hosteria della Posta' ('The Stage Inn') is a comedy of one act, and in prose. The subject of this piece is historical; the intrigue is very comic, and the winding-up very fortunate. It might be easily translated into French, if I am not mistaken.

'L'Avaro' ('The Miser') a comedy of one act, in prose, and the last of my five pieces for my private theatre.

This is a new sort of miser, not equal to the others,

However, I gave the piece a sufficiency of action and interest, and it had all the success which it could well have.

I have thus given an account of the pieces composed by me in Italy, which were acted before my departure. I have only to mention one more which was never represented, but which is to be found in the seventeenth volume of the Pasquali edition, and the eleventh of that of Turin.

This is a comedy of five acts, in verse, intitled 'The Fair Ward;' a work of fancy, composed after the manner of the ancients, and merely destined for the press that my 'Theatre' might contain pieces of every description, and give an idea of the comedy of every age.

The subject of 'The Fair Ward' is simple. It contains no variety of character, no intricacy of plot, but a natural and artless development. I endeavoured, however, to enliven the dryness of the ancient comedy by scenes, where the meaning will admit, of a double construction, which augments the interest of the piece, and keeps the reader's attention alive.

The catastrophe is not new. It is a guardian in love with his ward. She is discovered to be his only daughter, and he becomes the father-in-law of his former rival.

The style of this is different from that of my other pieces. I imitated more closely the writers of the good age; and, with respect to the versification, I took that of Ariosto, in his comedies, as my model.

After my last comedy, and my bidding adieu to the public, I thought only of preparing for my journey.

I began with my family arrangements. My mother was dead, and my aunt went to live with her relations. I gave up the whole of our revenues to my brother; I placed his daughter in a convent, and I designed that my nephew should accompany me to France.

I required to have some one at Venice to take charge of my niece. Her father was a soldier, and I

could not rely on him. I found a friend willing to bestow his care on her. This was M. John Cornet, a younger brother of Gabriel Cornet, both merchants of Venice, and of French descent. I shall not enlarge on the merit of this worthy and respectable family, which is well known from the extent of its dealings, and esteemed for its probity.

The second volume of my works had just issued from the press. I had begun this edition at Venice, where I had a number of subscribers, and I could not now withdraw it.

I supplied count Gaspar Gozzi, who took upon him the charge of correcting the press, with a sufficiency of materials to continue it. The illustrious senator, Nicolas Balba, assured me of his protection. M. Pasquali was an honest and respectable publisher; and I had nothing to fear as to the execution.

I set out from Venice with my wife and nephew in the beginning of April 176[illegible]. On arriving at Bologna, I fell sick. I was forced to compose a comic opera, which partook strongly of my fever. Fortunately, the opera only was buried.

On recovering my health, I continued my journey. I passed through Modena, where I merely renewed my power of attorney to my notary on account of the assignment to my nephew, and next day I set off for Parma. I passed eight days in that town very agreeably.

I had dedicated my new edition to the infant Don Philip: I had the honour to present him with the two first volumes; and I kissed their royal highnesses' hands. I then saw, for the first time, the infant Don Fernand, at that time hereditary prince, and now reigning duke. He did me the honour to converse with me, and to congratulate me on my journey to France—"You are very fortunate," said he; "you will see the king my grandfather."

I augured from his gentleness, that this prince would one day turn out the delight of his subjects; and I

have not been mistaken. The infant Don Fernand is adored by his people, and the august archduchess, his spouse, has carried the public felicity and the glory of this government to their utmost height.

On this occasion the abbé Frugoni, after three years misunderstanding, became reconciled to me. This new Petrarch had his Laura at Venice. He sung at a distance the graces and talents of the charming Aurisbe Tarsense, shepherdess of Arcadia, and I saw her every day. Frugoni was jealous of me, and was not sorry to see me leave the country.

I had volumes with me to present to her highness the princess Henrietta of Modena, duchess dowager of Parma, and latterly landgravine of D'Armstadt. The princess, who resided at Borgo San Domino, between Parma and Piacenza, was then at Corte Maggiore, her country-house.

I went several miles out of my road to pay my court to her. I met with a very favourable reception, and was honoured with comfortable lodgings for myself and people. We passed three days there very delightfully. The ladies and gentlemen of the court, who were in the habit of acting my plays on the theatre of the landgravine, were anxious to treat me with an entertainment; but the heat was excessive, and I was desirous of reaching Piacenza.

On arriving in that city, we were overpowered with kind attentions and new pleasures. The marquis Casati, who was one of my subscribers, expected me with impatience. We found everything which we could wish for in his house; excellent lodgings, good cheer, and delightful company. The marchioness and her daughter-in-law were studious in the extreme to please us; we remained there four days, and we could hardly prevail on them to allow us to proceed; but we had lost too much time already, and we had spent no less than three months since leaving Venice. Notwithstanding, therefore, the insupportable heat, we were obliged to set out again.

When at Piacenza, it became necessary to choose by what road I should proceed to France. My wife was desirous of seeing her relations before we quitted Italy; and I therefore preferred the road by Genoa to that of Turin, for her sake.

We passed eight days in a very gay manner in the native place of my wife; but the period of separation was attended with many sighs and tears. It was the more distressing, as our relations never expected to see us again. I promised to return in two years, but they did not believe me. At last, amidst adieus, embraces, tears, and cries, we embarked in the felucca of the French courier, and set sail for Antibes, steering along the shore which the Italians call La Riviera di Genova. We were driven from the roads by a hurricane, and almost cast away in doubling Cape Noli.

My fear was alleviated by a scene of a comic description. We had in the felucca a Provençal Carmelite friar, who murdered the Italian as I did the French.

This monk was terribly alarmed when he saw, at a distance, the approach of one of those mountains of water which threatened to ingulph us; and he bawled as loudly as he possibly could, "La voilà, la voilà!" (there it comes!) In Italian, we call the sail *la vela*; and I thought that the Carmelite wished the sailors to hoist their sails. I wished to convince him of his error, and he maintained that I was speaking nonsense; but whilst we were disputing, the cape was doubled, and we gained the roads. I had time, then, to perceive my mistake, and the candour to acknowledge my ignorance.

The unfavourable state of the weather prevented us from proceeding on our voyage. The courier, who durst not delay his journey, took a horse, and went on by land, and exposed himself to the difficulty of crossing mountains still more dangerous than the sea.

For forty-eight hours, every idea of re-embarking was out of the question. The sea still continuing boisterous, I went down to Nice, where the roads were

practicable. I quitted the felucca, and sought for a carriage.

We found one by chance, which had arrived the day before. It was the berlin which conveyed to Nice the famous mademoiselle Deschamps, on her escape from the prison of Lyons. I was told a part of her story. I slept in the room destined for her, and which she refused to accept on account of a bug which she discovered on entering it. I found the carriage very comfortable; and I bargained for my fare to Lyons, on condition of being allowed to go by Marseilles, and to stay there a few days. The driver belonged to that country; so that we had little difficulty in coming to an agreement.

I set out from Nice next day, and crossed the Var, which separates France from Italy. Here I reiterated my adieu to my own country, and invoked the shade of Molière to be my guide in that of his.

END OF PART THE SECOND.

PART THE THIRD.

CHAPTER XI.

My journey from the banks of the Var to Paris—My first sleeping station at Vidauban—Short dissertation on supper and soup—View of Marseilles—View of Avignon—A few words respecting Lyons—Letter from Paris—Union of the comic opera with the Italian comedy—Reflections respecting myself—My arrival at Paris—First impressions on viewing that city—My first visit—Charming dinner—Comic opera—A few words respecting the entertainment and the actors—Details regarding the Italian actors of Paris—My first journey to Fontainebleau—A few words on the court—Peace signed between France and England—The Italians act 'Harlequin's Child Lost and Found,' in the theatre of Fontainebleau—This piece does not please the court—Danger of outlines of pieces—My projects frustrated.

On entering the kingdom of France, I was soon struck with the French politeness. I had experienced several disagreeable circumstances at the Italian custom-houses; but I was visited in two minutes at the barrier of St Laurent, near the Var, and my trunks were not rummaged.

On arriving at Antibes, I received unspeakable attention from the commandant of that frontier place. I wished to show him my passport. "I dispense with that, sir," said he; "you are anxiously expected at Paris, and you must quicken your journey." I proceeded onwards, and slept the first night at Vidauban.

Supper was brought in. We had no soup on the table; my wife required some, and my nephew was also desirous of having it. On calling for it, we found that no person takes soup in France in the evening.

My nephew maintained that supper took its name from soup, and that consequently there ought to be soup at exery supper. The landlord, who understood nothing of these distinctions, made his bow, and went out.

My young man was correct in the main, and I amused myself in entering on a short dissertation respecting the etymology of supper and the suppression of soup.

"The ancients," said I, "made only one meal a day, the *cœna*, which was served up in the evening; and as this repast always began with soup, the French changed the word cœna into supper. In progress of time, luxury and gluttony multiplied the number of meals; soup was taken from the supper, and added to the dinner, and the *cœna* is now in France merely a supper without soup."

My nephew, who kept a little journal of our travels, did not fail to enter in his memorandum-book this piece of erudition of mine, which however whimsical it may appear, is not destitute of truth.

We set out next day from Vidauban at an early hour, and arrived in the evening at Marseilles. M. Cornet, the Venetian consul in this town, waited on us without delay; he offered us apartments in his house, which, from a sense of delicacy, we were induced to refuse; but being tormented in the course of the night by the insupportable vermin which sting and infect at the same time, we were obliged to accept of the generous offer of the brother of our good friends of Venice.

We enjoyed the sight of Marseilles for six days. Its situation is agreeable; it carries on a rich commerce; its inhabitants are very amiable, and the port is a master-piece of nature and art.

Continuing our journey, we passed through Aix. We merely passed in a carriage on the superb promenade called the Cours; and we arrived at an early hour at Avignon.

I discovered, on entering this town, the keys of St Peter, with the pontifical tiara over them.

I was anxious to see the palace which for sixty-two years continued to be the seat of the head of the catholic religion. I paid a visit to the vice-legate. This prelate invited me to dine with him next day, and I had an opportunity of seeing this ancient edifice which is still in such good preservation, that if the pope were to take it into his head to reside there again, he might be very conveniently lodged in it.

I had been now four months from Venice. Part of the time I was confined to my bed at Bologna, but I had taken a great deal of amusement since my recovery and I began to be afraid lest the slowness of my journey should injure me in the minds of those who were expecting me at Paris.

On arriving at Lyons, I found a letter from M. Zanuzzi lying there for me; it was full of reproaches, somewhat keen I must own, but not so sharp as I deserved.

Man is an inconceivable and an indefinable being. I cannot explain to myself the motives which sometimes induce me to act against my principles and against my interest.

With the best intentions in the world to give myself entirely up to whatever I am interested in, I am stopped or turned from my road by the merest trifles.

An innocent pleasure, a piece of respectful complaisance, a feeling of curiosity, a friendly advice, an engagement of little moment, are none of them to be considered as vicious; but there are cases and circumstances in which whatever withdraws the mind from what it is employed on may be considered dangerous; and I have never been able to shut my mind against yielding to these seductions.

I ought to have set out from Lyons the instant after I received that letter; but how could I possibly quit one of the most beautiful cities in France without viewing it? Could I omit visiting those manufactories

which supply Europe with their stuffs and their designs? I lodged in the royal park, and remained there ten days; did it require ten days, I may be asked, to examine what was worth observation in Lyons. No; but that time was hardly sufficient to allow me to accept all the dinners and suppers which those rich manufacturers vied with each other in giving me.

Besides, I injured no person. My salary was not to commence till my arrival in Paris; and supposing the Italian comedians to be in want of me, I was certain that by activity I should be enabled to indemnify them on my arrival.

But this want was at an end; for, during my journey, the comic opera had been united to the Italian comedy; the new branch gained ground on the old; and the Italians, who were before the support of this theatre, became only the accessaries of the entertainment. I was informed of this innovation at Lyons, though not so minutely as to enable me to form an idea of all the unpleasant circumstances with which the change would affect me. I even imagined that my countrymen would consider their honour at stake, would vie in emulation with their new comrades, and I supposed them perfectly enabled to sustain the conflict.

Animated by this confidence, with my usual gaiety and courage, I took the road to the capital; and the beauty of the journey, and the fertility of the plains through which I passed, filled my mind with the most cheerful ideas and flattering hopes.

On arriving at Villejuif, I found M. Zanuzzi, and madame Savi, the principal actress of the Italian comedy. They made my wife and myself take a place in their carriage, my nephew followed in mine; and we alighted at the Fauxbourg St Denis where they both lodged in the same house.

My arrival was celebrated the same day by a very gallant and gay supper, to which part of the Italian comedians were invited. We were fatigued, but we partook with pleasure of the delights of a brilliant so-

ciety, in which were blended the French sallies with the noise of Italian conversation.

Restored after the fatigues of the journey, by that delicious nectar which may well gain for Burgundy the name of the Land of Promise, I passed a sweet and tranquil night.

On awaking, my mind was in as agreeable a state as it had been in during my dreams. I was in Paris; I was happy; but I had yet seen nothing, and I was dying to view the place.

I spoke to my friend and host. "We must begin," said he, "with paying visits; we must wait for the carriage."—"By no means," said I; "I shall see nothing in a coach; let us set out on foot."—"But the distance is great."—"Never mind it."—"It is hot."—"That cannot be helped."

In fact, the heat was this year equal to that of Italy; but it was a circumstance of little moment for me. I was then only fifty-three; I was strong, healthy, and vigorous, and curiosity and impatience lent me wings.

In crossing the Boulevards, I had a glimpse of that vast promenade which surrounds the city, and affords to passengers the coolness of the shade in summer, and the heat of the sun in winter.

I entered the Palais Royal. What crowds! what an assemblage of people of every description! what a charming rendezvous! what a delightful promenade!

But with what a surprising view my senses and mind were struck on approaching the Tuileries! I saw the whole extent of that immense garden, which has nothing to be compared with it in the universe; and my eyes were unable to measure the length of it. I hastily ran through its alleys, its thickets, its terraces, basins, and borders. I have seen very rich gardens, superb buildings, and precious monuments; but nothing can equal the magnificence of the Tuileries.

On leaving this enchanting place, I was struck with another spectacle—a majestic river, numerous and

convenient bridges, vast quays, crowds of carriages, a perpetual throng of people. I was stunned by the noise, fatigued with the distance, and overpowered by the excessive heat. I was bathed in perspiration without being aware of it.

We crossed the Pont Royal, and entered the hotel d'Aumont. The duke was at home. This principal gentleman of the king's bed-chamber, who was in his year of duty, had sent for me to Paris; and he received me with kindness, and has always continued to honour me with his favour.

It was late, and we had not sufficient time to pay all the visits which we projected. We called a coach and drove to mademoiselle Camilla Veronese's, where we were expected to dinner.

It was impossible to be more gay and amiable than mademoiselle Camilla. She acted waiting-maids in the Italian theatre, and she was the delight of Paris on the stage, and of every society which had the felicity of enjoying her company.

We sat down to dinner. The guests were numerous, the dinner delicious, and the company amusing. We took coffee at table, and did not quit it till we went to the theatre.

The Italian theatre was then in the street Mauconseil. It was the old hotel de Bourgogne, where Molière displayed his talents and skill. This was a comic-opera day, and they represented 'The Painter in Love with his Model' and 'Sancho Pança.'

This was the first time of my seeing this singular mixture of prose and airs. I was at first led to think if the musical drama were in itself an imperfect work, this novelty rendered it still more monstrous.

However, after some further reflection, I felt dissatisfied with the Italian recitative, and still more so with the French; and as, in the comic-opera rules and probabilities are not attended to, it is better to hear a dialogue well recited, than to suffer the monotony of a wearisome recitative.

I was very well pleased with the actors of the opera. The action of madame la Ruette was equal to the melody of her voice. M. Clerval, an excellent actor, very agreeable in comic parts, and interesting in those which were pathetic, full of wit, ability and taste, was then only, as it were, announcing those talents which he afterwards carried to the utmost perfection. He still enjoys the same degree of credit and public applause.

M. Caillot was also one of those rare characters who possess every requisite to command applause. M. la Ruette, who stood high in extravagant characters, was always true and accurate, and was esteemed for his acting, notwithstanding his faulty tone. Madame Berard and mademoiselle Desglands were equally distinguished in the character of duennas, the first for her vivacity, and the other for the excellence of her voice.

All these admirable and estimable actors could not fail to please me; but I could not profit by their talents, as the inspection to which I was destined had no concern whatever with them.

That I might have a better opportunity of knowing my Italian actors, I took apartments near the theatre; and in that house I had the good fortune to possess a charming neighbour whose company has always been highly useful and agreeable to me.

This was madame Riccoboni, who, having renounced the theatre, delighted Paris with her novels, which, for purity of style, delicacy of images, truth of passion, and the art of interesting and amusing her readers at the same time, raised her to a level with whatever was most valuable in French literature.

I applied to madame Riccoboni to give me some preliminary account of my Italian actors. She knew them thoroughly, and favoured me with a description which I afterwards discovered to be perfectly correct and worthy of her candour and discretion.

M. Charles Bertinazzi, called Carlin, which is the diminutive of Charles in Italian, was in high estimation for his propriety of behaviour, celebrated as a Harlequin, and in the possession of a reputation which raised him to a level with Dominique and Thomassin in France, and Sacchi in Italy. Nature had endowed him with inimitable graces; his figure, his gesture, his movements, prepossessed every one in his favour. For his action and talents he was admired on the stage, and for his private character he was beloved in society.

Carlin was the public favourite: he had acquired the esteem of the frequenters of the pit to such a degree, that he spoke to them with an easy familiarity which no other actor durst presume to adopt. When the public were to be harangued, or when any excuse was to be made, Carlin was always employed, and his mode of communication was usually an agreeable dialogue between the actor and spectators.

Mademoiselle Camilla was an excellent waiting-maid, well suited to the Harlequin whom I have just mentioned. Full of wit and sentiment, she sustained comic parts with a charming vivacity, and played in touching situations with animation and intelligence. She was on the stage what she was in private, always gay, equal, and interesting, possessing a cultivated mind, and the qualities of an excellent heart.

M. Collalto was one of the best actors of Italy. He was the Pantaloon for whom I exerted myself so much, and of whom I spoke so much in the second part of my memoirs.

This man, who possessed the very soul of a comedian, had the art of conversing with his mask, but he shone still more without it. In Italy, he had acted in one of my pieces, called 'The Venetian Twins,' the one of whom was stupid, and the other clever. He gave a new turn to this subject, and added a third twin of a headstrong and passionate character. He represented the three different characters in great perfection and

with great applause, and I accorded to him, with the most sincere pleasure, all the merit of this new conception.

M. Ciavarelli played, under the name of Scapin, the characters of our Italian Brighellas. He was an excellent pantomime, and extremely accurate in his execution. M. Rubini filled occasionally the character of Doctor of the Italian comedy.

I have spoken of these five individuals before entering into any details respecting the male and female lovers, because they constituted the basis of the Italian comedy at Paris.

M. Zanuzzi was the principal lover. I had long known him: he made some noise in Italy, and was known there by the nick-name of Vitalbino, the diminutive of Vitalba, an Italian comedian of great celebrity, of whom I made honourable mention in the first part of my Memoirs.

He was seconded by M. Balletti, the son of an Italian father and a French mother; he possessed the two languages in equal perfection, and was acquainted with their respective genius. His talents had been injured, and his health affected, by accidents of a disagreeable nature; but in his acting we could still discover the school of Silvia, his mother, and of Lelio and Flaminia, who had contributed to his education.

Madame Savi, the principal actress, and madame Piccinelli, the second, were not very well adapted for comedy; but they were both young, and the one, from her desire of improvement, and the other, from the sweetness of her singing, might in time become useful. The former died a short time afterwards, and the second quitted the comic theatre to re-appear in the opera in Italy.

On the comic-opera days I observed an astonishing crowd of people, and on other days the house almost empty. This, however, did not alarm me. My dear countrymen only gave well-known pieces, and outlines

of an indifferent description, such as I had reformed in Italy.—"I shall give," said I to myself, "character, sentiment, plot, management, and style."

I communicated my ideas to my comedians.—Some of them encouraged me to follow my plan, and others asked only for farces. The first were lovers, who were desirous of written pieces; the second, comic actors, who, unaccustomed to learn anything by heart, were ambitious of shining without taking the pains of studying. I proposed to wait a little before commencing my task. I demanded four months' time to examine the public taste, to ascertain the mode of pleasing at Paris; and during that time I did nothing but run about, pry into everything, and enjoy myself.

Paris is a world of itself: everything there is on a large scale, the good and bad both in abundance. Whether you go to theatres, promenades, or places of pleasure, you find every corner full. Even the churches are crowded. In a town of eight hundred thousand souls, there must necessarily be more of both good and bad people than anywhere else; and it rests with ourselves to make our choice. The debauchee will find it easy to gratify his passions, and the virtuous man will meet with encouragement in the exercise of his virtues.

I was neither so fortunate as to rank with the latter, nor so wretched as to give myself up to irregularity. I continued to live at Paris in my usual manner, fond of decent pleasures, and esteeming worthy and honourable men.

Every day I felt myself more and more confounded in the ranks, the classes, the manners of living, and the different modes of thinking. I no longer knew what I was, what I wished for, or what I was becoming. I was quite absorbed in the vortex. I saw the necessity of returning to myself, but I could find no means of doing so, or rather, I did not attempt it.

Fortunately for me, the court went to Fontainebleau,

whither the different actors were obliged to repair. I followed them with my little family, and I found, in this delightful abode, the repose and tranquillity which I had sacrificed to the amusement of the capital.

I saw every day the royal family, the princes of the blood, the grandees of the kingdom, the French and foreign ministers, all assembled at the castle, and was present at the royal dinners; they followed the court to mass, to the theatre, to hunting parties, without embarrassment, constraint, or confusion.

Fontainebleau is neither large nor rich, nor elegant; but the situation is agreeable. The forest abounds with admirable rural views, and the royal castle, which is very large and very commodious, is a precious monument of ancient architecture, very rich, and in very good preservation.

In this castle and that of Compiegne, the great affairs of state are usually terminated; and at Fontainebleau, in this very year of 1762, of which I am speaking, peace was signed between England and France.

In the course of this visit, the Italians gave 'Harlequin's Child Lost and Found.' This piece, which was very successful at Paris, did not meet with the like success at Fontainebleau. It was an outline; the comedians thought proper to incorporate some of the jokes of the 'Cocu Imaginaire,' which displeased the court, and ruined the piece.

This is the great inconvenience of comedies of this description. The actor who plays from his own head, speaks sometimes at random, spoils a scene, and damns a piece. I was not attached to this work; on the contrary, I have said enough in the first part of these Memoirs, to prove in how little estimation I held it; but still I was sorry to see the first piece of mine ever given at court, unsuccessful.

This troublesome event proved still more strongly

the necessity of giving pieces fully written. I returned to Paris with a firm and determined mind; but I had not to do with my comedians of Italy; I was no longer the master at Paris, as I had been in my own country.

CHAPTER XII.

My return to Paris—My observations and projects—My lodgings at the Palais Royal—'Paternal Love,' my first comedy—Its indifferent reception—Pieces given at the Italian theatre during the course of two years—New observations respecting the comic-opera—A few words respecting the French theatre—I go there for the first time—I see 'The Misanthrope'—A few words respecting this work and the actors—'The Père de Famille,' ('Father of a Family') of Diderot—Anecdotes respecting that author and myself—The Dominicals, a literary society—The first time of my going to the French opera—My attachment to that entertainment taken altogether—Act of imprudence committed by me—'Castor and Pollux' reconciles me to the French opera—A few words respecting Rameau, Glück, Piccini, and Sacchini.

On returning to Paris I looked with another eye on that immense city, its population, its amusements, and its seductions. I had had time for reflection, and to learn that the confusion in which everything appeared at first to me, proceeded neither from the nature nor manners of the people, but from the curiosity and impatience to which my giddiness was attributable. I was obliged frankly to own that it is impossible to enjoy Paris, and be amused in it, without a sacrifice of either time or tranquillity. I had formed, on my arrival, too many acquaintances; I proposed to preserve

them, but to enjoy them in moderation; and I destined my mornings to labour, and the rest of the day to company.

I took apartments at the Palais Royal; my study looked into the garden, which was very different then from what the late improvements have made it, but which possessed peculiar beauties which some people still regret.

Notwithstanding my occupation, I could not avoid bestowing a look every now and then at that delightful alley, which was animated every hour by so many different objects.

The breakfasts at the Café de Foi (the Faith Coffee-house) were taken under my window. People of every description resorted there, to repose and refresh themselves.

I overlooked also the famous chesnut-tree, called the Tree of Cracow, round which the newsmongers used to flock with their news, and to trace trenches, camps, military positions, and divide Europe as their fancy led them, with their canes on the sand.

These voluntary abstractions were sometimes useful to me. They afforded an agreeable repose to my mind, and I returned to my labour with more vigour and more gaiety.

I was now preparing for my debut; and it was incumbent on me to make my first appearance on the French stage with some new production which might correspond with the opinion of me previously entertained by the public. My actors were still divided in opinion. Some persisted in their preference of written pieces, while others approved of outlines. A meeting was called on my account, and at which I was present. I showed them the indecency of introducing an author without dialogue; and it was agreed that I should begin with a finished piece.

I was now satisfied; but I still foresaw that the actors, who had lost the habit of getting their characters by heart, without any malice or improper intention

on their part, would second my views very imperfectly. I found myself, therefore, under the necessity of confining my ideas, and limiting myself to a subject of no great boldness of conception, that I might not hazard a work which should require too great accuracy in the execution, flattering myself with the idea of bringing them gradually to the reform, which I had carried into effect in Italy.

With this view, I composed a comedy in three acts, intitled 'Paternal Love; or, The Grateful Waiting Maid.' It had only four representations.

I wished to take my departure immediately; but how could I leave Paris, which had so fascinated me? My engagement was for two years, and I was tempted to remain the whole of the period. The most of the Italian actors asked only for outlines; the public were accustomed to them, the court suffered them, and why should I have refused to comply with the established practice? "Well then," said I, "let us compose outlines, if they will have them; every sacrifice seems nothing, every pain seems supportable for the pleasure of remaining two years in Paris."

It cannot be said, however, that my amusements prevented me from discharging my duty. In the space of these two years, I produced twenty-four pieces, the titles of which, and their fate, are to be found in the 'Theatrical Almanack' ('Almanach des Spectacles.')

Eight of these pieces were successful, and they cost me more labour than if I had written them entirely out. I could only please by interesting situations, and a comic humour artfully prepared and secured from the caprices of the actors. I was more successful than I could have expected; but whatever was the success of my pieces, I seldom went to see them. I preferred good comedy, and frequented the French theatre for the sake of amusement and instruction.

I had a free admission to the theatre; an honour conferred on me on my arrival in Paris. This was the more flattering for me, as nobody could then have

foreseen that I would one day be enrolled in the catalogue of their authors.

I found this national spectacle equally well supplied with tragic and comic actors. The Parisians spoke with enthusiasm of their departed actors of celebrity. It was said that nature had destroyed the moulds in which she cast these great men; but in this they were mistaken. Nature produces the mould, the model, and the original, at the same time, and renews them at pleasure. This is the way in all ages: we always regret the past, and complain of the present—such is human nature.

It was impossible to wish for two more accomplished actresses than mademoiselle Dumenil and mademoiselle Clairon. The one represented nature in all her truth, and the other carried the art of declamation to the highest point of perfection.

The elevation and refinement displayed by madame Preville, and the charming naiveté of mademoiselle d'Oligny, were not less estimable and deserving of admiration.

The latter rendered an important service to women in her situation. She shewed them that the mere profits of acting are sufficient to procure an agreeable and decent retreat.

M. le Kain was a wonderful man; his figure, height, and voice, were all against him. He was sublime through art; and M. Brisard enjoyed all the advantages of his person, his merit, and professional skill.

M. Molé then acted the characters of lovers. It is in vain to enter into comparisons, and to rake up the ashes of the old actors: I do not believe that there ever was one in his walk more brilliant or more agreeable. Noble in his passion, animated in his gaiety, and original in his caricatures, he was a perfect Proteus, always beautiful, always new and surprising.

With respect to M. Preville, I at once observed that everybody did him justice. I heard no comparisons with him. He was indeed an actor who imitated no

one, and whom no one will ever imitate. Our age produced three great actors nearly at the same time: Garrick in England, Preville in France, and Sacchi in Italy. The first was accompanied to his grave by dukes and peers. The second has been loaded with honours and rewards. The third, with all his celebrity, will not end his career in opulence.

The first time I went to the French theatre, 'The Misanthrope' was acted, and the part of Alceste was performed by M. Grandval.

This very able and very popular and esteemed actor, having served out his time, had retired on a pension. After a few years, he was seized with a desire of making his appearance again on the stage, and this was the day when that event took place.

He was excessively applauded at his first entrance; and it was easy to see the estimation in which he was held by the public. But at a certain age, "spiritus promptus est, caro autem infirma;" and this is the reason why I did not mention him before.

For my part, I thought him excellent, and I preferred him to a number of others on account of his excellent voice; my ear was not yet familiarized with the French language; I lost a great deal in company, and still more at the theatre.

Fortunately, I was acquainted with the 'Misanthrope.' It was the piece I esteemed the most in the works of Molière, a piece of unequalled perfection, and which, independently of the regularity of the plot, and the beauties of the composition, possesses the merit of invention and novelty of character.

The comic authors, ancient and modern, before his time, brought the vices and defects of humanity, in general, on the stage; Molière was the first to ridicule the manners of his own age and country.

I saw with infinite pleasure the representation at Paris of this comedy, which I had so often read and admired in the closet. I did not understand all that the comedians uttered, and especially those who dis-

played a volubility, which, however much applauded, was very painful to me; but I understood enough to admire the precision, the dignity, and the spirited action of those incomparable actors.

"Ah!" said I then to myself, "if I could only see one of my pieces acted by such performers; the best of my pieces is not equal to the worst of Molière; but the zeal and activity of the French actors would do more for it than I could expect from the Italians."

This is the school of declamation: there is nothing forced in the action or expression; feet, arms, and eyes, and mute scenes; all is study, but the study is concealed by art under the appearance of nature.

I left the theatre quite enchanted. I wished anxiously for two things, either to be able to compose pieces for French actors, or to see my countrymen capable of imitating them. Which would be the most difficult to realize? Time alone could determine this difficulty.

In the mean time, I was assiduous in my attendance at the French theatre. They had given the year before, 'The Father of a Family,' by M. Diderot; a new and successful comedy. It was generally said at Paris that this was an imitation of the piece composed by me under the same title, which was printed in my works.

I went to the theatre to see it, but I could perceive no resemblance to my play. The public were unjust when they accused this poet and philosopher of plagiarism, and this suspicion was infused into them by a criticism in the 'Literary Year' ('Année Litteraire.')

Diderot produced some years before, a comedy intitled 'The Natural Son;' and Freron, in speaking of it in his periodical work, stated that there was a great resemblance between the French piece and 'The True Friend' of M. Goldoni. Freron contrasted the French and Italian scenes, and both seemed to be derived from the same source. In concluding this article,

the journalist observed, that the author of 'The Natural Son' promised to give 'A Father of a Family;' that Goldoni had also given a play with that title; and that it would be seen whether they would by chance turn out the same.

M. Diderot was far from being under the necessity of crossing the Alps for comic subjects to relieve his mind with after his scientific occupations. Three years afterwards, he gave 'The Father of a Family,' which had no resemblance whatever to mine.

My protagonist was a mild, wise, and prudent man, whose character and conduct were equally instructive and exemplary. That of M. Diderot, on the other hand, was a harsh and severe father, who pardoned nothing, and gave his malediction to his son. He was one of those wretched beings who exist in nature, but whom I should never have dared to bring on the stage.

I did M. Diderot justice: I endeavoured to undeceive those who supposed his 'Father of a Family' to be taken from mine; but I said nothing respecting his 'Natural Son.' The author was displeased with Freron and me; he wished to give vent to his rage, and to let it fall on one or other of us. The preference was given to me. He printed a 'Discourse on Dramatic Poetry,' in which he treated me somewhat harshly.

"Charles Goldoni," he said, "has written in Italian a comedy, or rather a farce, in three acts." In another place he said, "Charles Goldoni has composed some sixty farces." It was easy to see that this light way of treating me and my works was expressive of the consideration in which he held them, and that he called me Charles Goldoni as we name Pierre le Roux in Rose and Colas. He is the only French writer who did not honour me with his kindness.

I was vexed to see a man possessed of such distinguished merit prejudiced against me. I did what I could to have an opportunity of meeting him, not with

the view of complaining of his treatment of me, but to convince him that I did not deserve his indignation. I endeavoured to procure an introduction to those houses which he was in the habit of frequenting; but I was never so fortunate as to fall in with him. At length, tired of waiting, I called upon him at his own house.

I entered one day, escorted by M. Duni, who was one of his friends. After being announced and received, the Italian musician presented me as a literary man of his country, desirous of forming an acquaintance with those who were at the head of French literature. M. Diderot vainly endeavoured to conceal the embarrassment into which he was thrown by my introducer. He could not, however, shrink from what the rules of politeness and society prescribed in such a case.

We spoke of different matters, and at last the conversation fell on dramatic works. Diderot honestly owned to me, that some of my pieces had caused him a deal of chagrin; I courageously answered him, that I perceived this. "You know, sir," said he, "what it is for a man to be wounded in his most delicate part."—"Yes, sir," replied I, "I am aware of that; I understand you; but I have nothing to reproach myself with."——"Come, come," said M. Duni, interrupting us, "these literary bickerings ought not to be carried any further; both of you ought to follow Tasso's advice—

'Ogni trista memoria omai si taccia;
'E pongansi in obblio le andate cose.

'Let no disagreeable remembrances be recalled; and let everything past be buried in oblivion.'"

M. Diderot, who understood Italian sufficiently, seemed to subscribe with a good grace to the advice of the Italian poet: we finished our conversation with reciprocal expressions of friendship, and both M. Duni

and myself parted from him very well satisfied with what had taken place.

I have all my life endeavoured to make up to those who had either good or bad reasons for avoiding me; and whenever I have succeeded in gaining the esteem of a man prepossessed against me, I have considered that day as a day of triumph.

On parting from M. Diderot, I also took leave of M. Duni, and repaired to a literary assembly, of which I was an associate, and where I was that day to dine.

This society was not numerous, as there were but nine of us: M. de la Place, who edited the 'Mercure de France;' M. de la Garde, who had the department of theatrical criticism in the same work; M. Saurin, of the French Academy; M. Louis, perpetual secretary of the Royal Chirurgical Academy; the abbé de la Porte, author of several literary works; M. Crebillon, the younger; M. Favart, and M. Jouen. The last-mentioned was not distinguished for his talents, but famous for the delicacies of his table.

Each member of the society received in turn the whole of the others in his house, and gave a dinner to them; and as the sittings were held on Sundays, they were called Dominical meetings, and we were called Dominicals.

We had no other regulations among us than those of good company; but it was agreed that no women should enter our meetings. We were aware of their charms, and we dreaded the soft enticements of the fair sex.

Our Dominical meeting was held one day at the hotel of the marchioness de Pompadour, of whom M. de la Garde was the secretary. We were just sitting down to dinner, when a carriage entered the court, in which we perceived a female. We recognised in her an actress of the opera, in high estimation for her talents, and distinguished for her wit and amiable behaviour in company.

Two of the members went down stairs, and escorted her up to us. On entering, she asked, in a jocular manner, to be permitted to dine with us. Could we refuse her a plate? Each of us would have given up his own, and I should not have been the last to do this.

This lady was irresistibly engaging. In the course of the dinner, she demanded to be admitted into the society; and she arranged her peroration in so new and singular a manner, that she was received with acclamation.

During the dessert, we looked at the clock; it was half-past four. Our new associate did not act that day, but she was desirous of going to the opera; and the society were almost all disposed to accompany her. The only one who displayed no eagerness to go was myself.

"Ah, M. Italian," said the lady, laughing, "you are not fond of French music then?"—"I possess no great knowledge of it," said I; "I have never been at the opera; but I hear a deal of singing wherever I go, and all the airs only serve to disgust me."—"Let us see," said she, "if I can overcome any of your prejudices against our music."—She immediately began to sing, and I felt myself delighted and enchanted. What a charming voice! It was not powerful, but just, touching, and delightful. I was in extacy.—"Come," said she, "embrace me, and follow me to the opera." I embraced her, and went to the opera accordingly.

I was at length present at this entertainment, which several persons could have wished me to see before everything else, and which I should not, perhaps, have seen so soon, if it had not been for this circumstance.

The actress whom we had received into our society took three of our brethren with her into her box, and I seated myself with two others in the amphitheatre. This part, which takes up a part of the theatres in France, is in front of the stage, in the form of a semi-

circle, and the seats, which are well furnished and commodious, are raised in gradations above one another. This is the best place in the house for seeing and hearing. I was contented with my situation, and I pitied the audience in the pit, who were on their feet, and closely crowded, and who were not to blame for their impatience.

The orchestra began, and I found the harmony of the instruments of a superior kind, and very accurate in point of execution. But the overture appeared to me cold and languid: I was sure it was not Rameau's; for I had heard his overtures and ballet airs in Italy.

The action commenced; and, notwithstanding my favourable situation, I could not hear a word. However, I patiently waited for the airs, in the expectation that I should at least be amused with the music. The dancers made their appearance, and I imagined the act finished, but heard not a single air. I spoke of this to my neighbour, who laughed at me, and assured me that we had had six in the different scenes which I had heard.

"What!" said I, "I am not deaf; the instruments never ceased accompanying the voices, sometimes more loudly and sometimes more slowly than usual, but I took the whole for recitative."

"Look, look, there is Vestris," said he, "the most elegant, able, and accomplished dancer in Europe."

I saw in reality, in a country-dance, this shepherd of the Arno triumphing over the shepherds of the Seine; but two minutes afterwards three characters sung all at the same time. This was a trio, which I confounded, perhaps, in the same manner with the recitative. The first act then closed.

As nothing takes place between the acts of the French opera, they soon began the second act. I heard the same music, and felt the same weariness. I gave up altogether the drama and its accompaniments, and began to examine the entertainment taken as a

whole, which I thought surprising. The principal male and female dancers had arrived at an astonishing pitch of perfection, and their suite was very numerous and very elegant. The music of the chorusses appeared to me more agreeable than that of the drama. I recognised the psalms of Corelli, Biffi, and Clari.

The decorations were superb, the machines well contrived, and admirably executed. The dresses were very rich, and the stage was always well filled with people.

Everything was beautiful, grand, and magnificent, except the music. At the end of the drama there was a sort of *chacone* sung by an actress who did not appear among the characters of the drama, and seconded by the music of the chorusses and by dancing. This agreeable surprise might have enlivened the piece; but it was a hymn rather than an air.

When the curtain fell, I was asked by all my acquaintances how I liked the opera? My answer flew from my lips like lightning—"It is a paradise for the eyes, and a hell for the ears."

This insolent and inconsiderate reply made some laugh, and others turn up their noses. Two gentlemen belonging to the king's chapel thought it excellent. The author of the music was not far from me, and perhaps overheard what I said. I was very much concerned, for he was a worthy man.—*Requiescat in pace!*

I was present some days afterwards at the representation of 'Castor and Pollux;' and the drama, which was perfectly well written, and acted with superior decorations, reconciled me a little with the French opera. I soon perceived the difference between the music of Rameau and that which had given me so much displeasure.

I was very intimate with that celebrated composer, for whose talents and science I had the highest consideration; but we must be sincere. Rameau distin-

guished himself, and produced a great revolution in France in instrumental music: but he made no essential changes in vocal music.

It was supposed that the French language was not adapted to the new taste which it was wished to introduce in singing. This was believed by Jean Jaques Rousseau, as well as others; and he was astonished to see this error refuted in the music of the chevalier Glük.

But this learned German musician merely paved the way for the introduction of Italian music, and it was reserved for M. Piccini and M. Sacchini, to complete the reform which the French seem to enjoy more and more every day.

I have lengthened out this digression without perceiving what I was about.

I am not a musician, but I am fond of impassioned music; if an air affect or amuse me, I listen to it with delight, and never examine whether it is French or Italian. There is but one music, in my opinion.

CHAPTER XIII.

The opera house burst down—The spiritual concert—The two years of my engagement at Paris draw near to their end—My indecision—The Venetian ambassador wishes my return to my country—Death of that minister—Fortunate event for me—I am taken into the employment of the French princesses—I run a risk of losing my sight—My defects—My foibles in society—My lodgings in the castle of Versailles—Short excursion from the court to Marly—A few observations respecting that charming place—The grand journey of the court to Compeigne—A few words respecting that town, and on the camps that year—Death of the infant Don Philip, duke of Parma—My excursion to Chantilly.

COULD I have suspected, when I was present at the representation of Castor and Pollux, that the boards which resisted the infernal flames of that opera would be reduced to ashes before the end of the month?

This was what happened, however. A candle which was neglected to be put out, burned the theatre of the Palais Royal to the ground, and till a new house could be built, the opera was removed to the castle of the Tuileries, where the spiritual concert is conducted at present.

This is the time to speak of this pious spectacle, consecrated to the praises of God, and which is only open when every other place is shut.

It is a concert composed of the best voices and instruments. Psalms, hymns, and oratorios, are sung; symphonies and concertos executed; and the most celebrated musicians sent for from every part of Europe.

The foreign singers deviate from the original institution of this concert, which was formerly sung wholly in Latin; but the French pronunciation is so different

from that of every other country, that the most able and agreeable strangers would appear ridiculous at Paris, by exposing themselves to sing in Latin.

Strangers, therefore, sing in Italian; for it seems that other nations have no particular music, and the liberty of changing their language leads to that of changing the subjects sung; so that, in the midst of spiritual hymns, we sometimes hear short cantatas, which are not the part of the entertainment productive of the least pleasure.

We have no public concerts in Italy in the grand style of that of Paris. At Venice there are four female hospitals, as I mentioned in the first part of these Memoirs; at Naples the conservatories are schools for vocal and instrumental music, the 'Pères de l'Oratoire' give oratorios in their congregation, and we find everywhere concerts among the professors and amateurs; but none of these establishments are equal in magnificence to that of Paris.

I give an account of the entertainments of that city to those who are unacquainted with it. My Memoirs may be used as wastepaper, but I write as if they were to be read in the four quarters of the world.

I became everyday more and more acquainted with the advantages of that city, and everyday my attachment to it increased. The two years of my engagement, however, were drawing to a close, and I considered the necessity of again changing my country as indispensable.

The Portuguese ambassador had employed me for his court, and made me a present of a thousand crowns for a small work which had been successful at Lisbon. I had every reason for supposing that I should not be refused in a country where theatrical entertainments were then in vogue, and where talents were rewarded.

The chevalier Tiepolo, the Venetian ambassador, on the other hand, perpetually urged me to return to my country, where I was beloved, and where my re-

turn was warmly desired. His embassy was at an end, and he would have taken me along with him, and maintained and protected me; but he was dangerously ill: he took his leave of the court, sinking under the pressure of his illness, and went to Geneva to consult the famous Tronchin, where he finished his days, to the great regret of the republic and the French court, by both of whom he was held in the highest estimation.

During this state of indecision, a lucky star flew to my assistance. I became acquainted with mademoiselle Sylvestre, reader to the late Dauphiness, mother of Louis XVI. This lady, the daughter of the principal painter of Augustus, king of Poland and elector of Saxony, had been employed at Dresden in the education of her august mistress, and enjoyed in France all the credit to which her talents and good conduct so properly entitled her.

Mademoiselle Sylvestre, who knew Italian thoroughly, was well acquainted with my works, and, being of a kind and obliging disposition, took an interest in my welfare. I had spoken to her of my attachment to Paris, and the regret with which I should abandon it; and she engaged to mention me at court, where my name was not unknown. Eight days afterwards, she sent for me to Versailles, whither I repaired without delay. I alighted at the king's small stables (petites ecuries,) where mademoiselle Sylvestre lived in family with her relations, who were all in the service of the royal family.

After a most gracious, kind, and hearty reception, our first conversation terminated in the following result; and in this way an affair of great importance for me was begun and ended on this fortunate day.

The dauphiness was acquainted with me; she had seen my pieces represented at Dresden; she caused them to be read to her, and her reader did not fail to embellish them, and to throw in now and then some-

thing or other in favour of the author. She succeeded so well with her mistress, that this princess promised to honour me with her protection, and to attach me to the court.

The dauphiness could have wished to employ me in the instruction of her children, but they were too young to attempt a foreign language. The daughters of Louis XV had been taught the principles of the Italian language by M. Hardion, the king's librarian at Versailles. They had a relish for Italian literature, and the dauphiness, availing herself of this fortunate circumstance, sent me to the duchess of Narbonne, whom she had prepossessed in my favour, that I might be introduced to madame Adelaide of France. The duchess of Narbonne then attended on her, and is at present a lady of honour.

I had the honour of being acquainted with the duchess of Narbonne at the court of Parma. She received me kindly, and presented me the same day to her august mistress; and I was instantly received into the service of the French princesses.

No salary was mentioned, and I asked none. I was proud of so honourable an employment, and sure of the kindness of my august scholars. I took my departure, therefore, very well pleased with what had taken place, and communicated the adventure to my wife, who knew the value of it as well as myself. I bade adieu to the Italian theatre, which was not, perhaps, sorry at getting rid of me, and I received, with sincere pleasure, the compliments of all those who took an interest in my welfare.

The chevalier Gradenigo, who succeeded M. Tiepolo as Venetian ambassador, knew better than any other person the consequence to which such a fortunate event might lead. This illustrious patrician was the intimate friend of the duke de Choiseul: he recommended me to that minister, who was at the head of two of the most considerable departments, foreign

affairs, and war, and who enjoyed, with great justice, the highest credit at the court of France, and the utmost consideration throughout the rest of Europe.

With such an honourable employment, and such powerful protection, I ought to have made a brilliant fortune in France. If I have only acquired a very moderate fortune, it has been my own fault. I was at court, but I was not a courtier.

Madame Adelaide was the first who took lessons in the Italian language. I had not yet lodgings at Versailles; she sent a post-chaise for me; and it was in one of those vehicles that I nearly lost my sight.

I was foolish enough to read in the chaise; the book I was then engaged with was Jean Jacques Rousseau's letters from the Mountain, and I felt considerably interested in it.

One day I lost all at once the use of my eyes; the book fell out of my hands, and I could not even see to pick it up. I gave myself up for lost.

I still possessed, however, enough of the visual faculty to enable me to distinguish the light; I got out of my chaise, and proceeded to the apartments of madame Adelaide, which I entered quite disconcerted, and in the utmost agitation. The princess perceived my distress, and was kind enough to enquire the cause of it. I durst not tell her of my situation; I hoped I should be able to discharge my duty in some way or other. I found my seat in its place, and I seated myself as usual. Having discovered the book I was to read, I opened it, when, O heavens! everything appeared white to me. I was thus at last forced to own my misfortune.

It is impossible to paint the goodness, sensibility, and compassion of this great princess. She sent to her chamber for eye-water; she allowed me to bathe my eyes; she drew the curtains in such a way that a sufficiency of light to distinguish different objects was all that remained. My sight gradually returned: I

saw but little, though I was enabled to see sufficiently for my purpose at that time. It was not the eye-water which performed the miracle, but the kindness of the princess, which imparted strength to my mind and senses.

I resumed the book, which I found myself enabled to read; but madame Adelaide would not allow me to do so. She gave me leave to depart, and recommended me to her physician. In a few days, I recovered the complete use of my right eye, but I have lost the other for ever.

I am thus blind of one eye, a slight inconvenience which does not give me much uneasiness; but there are cases in which it heightens my defects, and adds to my awkwardness. It is at the gaming-table that I am most troublesome to others. The candle must be placed on my right side, and if there happen to be a lady in company in the same predicament with myself, she dares not own it, but she considers my pretension ridiculous. At brelan, where the candles are placed in the middle of the table, I can see nothing. At whist or tresset, where partners are changed, I must carry the candle with me. Independently of my defective sight, I possess other singularities; I dread heat in winter, and cold in summer—I must have screens to secure me from the fire, and an open window in the evening gives me a cold during the most violent heats.

I know not how the ladies whom I have the honour of knowing can suffer me, and allow me to draw a card, to be of their party. It is because they are good and kind, and because I play at all games; refuse no match; am not frightened at deep play, and not less amused when I play for small sums; because I am not a bad player, and, notwithstanding my defects, am one of the best-natured men in company.

After six months' service, I got lodgings in the castle of Versailles. I received the apartments destined for

the accoucheur of the dauphiness, whom that princess could dispense with, on account of the ill state of health of the dauphin.

In the month of May, of the same year, 1765, the court made a short excursion to Marly. I accompanied the princesses, and enjoyed the delightful situation of that place.

After seeing the garden of the Tuileries, and the park of Versailles, I thought that nothing would surprise me; but the position and beauties of the garden of Marly made such an impression on me, that I should have given the preference to that enchanting spot, if the remembrance of the richness and extent of the others had not regulated my comparisons. Those who have seen this castle, its garden, its immense parterre, its compartments, its designs, its jets-d'eau, and its cascades, will do me justice; and the accurate descriptions which we have of it, confirm the judgment of it formed by me.

What adds to the pleasures and delights of this rural abode is the gaming-house. Every person who is known, may enter; and there are corners for those who cannot, or are not disposed to penetrate into the circle.

I preferred one of these bye corners, to see for the first time the arrival of the king and his attendants. It was a striking sight. The king entered, accompanied by the queen, the princes, princesses, and the whole court, and took his seat at the great table, surrounded by all that was distinguished in the kingdom. The queen made a party that day at cavagnol. The dauphiness and princesses had different gaming-tables. They discovered me in my corner, and requested me to come forward, and I saw myself confounded amid the crowd of nobles, ministers, and magistrates. They played lansquenet at the king's table, where every one by turns held the hand. It was said that Louis XV was fortunate at play; I waited till he held the bank;

I ventured six louis d'ors on my account in favour of the bank, and I gained.

The king went out, and the royal family followed him. The rest of the company remained and played in any way, and for any sum they chose. One lady remained a day and two nights at the same table, ordering chocolate and biscuits, that she might nourish at the same time her body and her passion.

Although pleasure was the primary object of this agreeable excursion, I had my regular hours for labouring with the princesses. One day I was met by one of my august scholars in the passage, as she was going to dinner. She looked at me and said, bye-and bye (*à tantôt*).

Tantosto, in Italian, means 'immediately:' I thought the princess meant to take her lesson on rising from table; I remained in waiting with as much patience as my appetite would permit. At length the principal lady in waiting made me enter at four o'clock in the afternoon.

On opening her book, the princess put a question to me, which she was in the daily habit of doing, where I had dined that day?—"Nowhere, madam," said I. "What! you have not dined?"—"No, madam."—Are you unwell."—"No, madam."—"Why have you not dined, then:—"Because, madam, you did me the honour of saying *à tantôt* to me."—"Does not this expression, when used at two o'clock, mean about four o'clock in the afternoon?—"Perhaps it may, madam; but this term in Italian signifies immediately." The princess smiled, shut her book, and sent me to dine.

There are both French and Italian terms which bear a resemblance to one another, and yet have quite a different meaning. I still fell into some of these *qui pro quos*, and I may say, that the little French I know was acquired by me during the three years I was employed in the service of the princesses. They read

the Italian poets and prose writers; I stammered out a bad translation into French; they repeated it gracefully and elegantly, and in this exercise the master learned more than the scholar.

On returning to Versailles, the health of the dauphin seemed to be on the recovery. He was fond of music, and the dauphiness took care to provide some for his amusement.

I composed an Italian cantata, which I got set to music by an Italian composer, and I presented it to that princess, who, in accepting it, had the goodness to invite me to hear it executed in her room after supper.

I learned on this occasion a piece of etiquette of which I was before ignorant. I entered the apartments of the princess at ten o'clock at night, and presented myself at the door of the closet of the nobility. The door-keeper did not prevent me from entering. The dauphin and dauphiness were at table, and I took a convenient station to see them sup. A lady in waiting came up to me, and asked if I was intitled to admission in the evening?—"I do not know, madam," said I, "the difference between admission by day and in the evening; the princess herself commanded me to repair to her room after her supper—I have come too soon, perhaps; I did not know the etiquette." . . . . "Sir," replied the lady, "there is none for you, you may remain." I own that my self-love was not a little gratified on this occasion.

I remained. When the prince and princess had finished supper, I was called, and my cantata was performed. The dauphiness played the harpsichord, madame Adelaide accompanied her on the violin, and mademoiselle Hardy (afterwards madame de la Brusse) sung. The music gave pleasure, and compliments were paid to the author of the words, which I received very modestly. On my preparing to go away, the dauphin had the goodness to detain me. He sung himself, and I had the good fortune to hear him

But what did he sing?—A pathetic air from an oratorio called 'The Pilgrim at the Sepulchre.'

This prince was declining every day, but he was possessed of fortitude; and the desire of quieting the minds of the court respecting his situation, made him conceal his sufferings, and assume a cheerful look in public.

The king passed six weeks regularly every summer at Compeigne, and as many in autumn at Fontainbleau. These rural excursions were called the great journeys, because all the departments, and all the offices of the ministry were removed there, and the foreign ministers also accompanied the court.

Both took place this year, 1765, after the short excursion to Marly, and the journey to Compeigne was brilliant and magnificent in the highest degree.

Several French and foreign regiments in the service of the crown of France were ordered to attend. Each of them by turns, on different days, encamped in the neighbourhood of the town. They went through the manual exercise in all its different evolutions with an accuracy of execution, which the presence of the sovereign probably heightened.

The reviews were rendered still more interesting from the suite of the king. This monarch mounted on a superb horse, was followed by a very numerous cohort of horsemen in rich dresses. The queen, dauphiness, and princesses, appeared in carriages of the utmost magnificence. The princesses of the blood and the ladies of the court augmented the pomp of this distinguished suite, and the concourse of people from all quarters heightened the grandeur of the spectacle.

The dauphin, who was colonel of the dauphin regiment of dragoons, commanded himself during the review of his own regiment, on the eve of the day when he was to appear before the king.

After the very long and fatiguing exercise of which I had been a witness, and during which the dauphin

made efforts that alarmed me for him, I returned to the Castle in one of the court carriages, and placed myself alone in a door to see the prince arrive. He saw me, and looked at me with a sort of warlike pride, seeming to say, Look, how robust and how well I am. His vigorous mind animated a languishing body.

This same year, and while we were at Compeigne, a courier from Parma brought the melancholy news of the death of the infant don Philip, my protector and master. The court of France went into mourning for three months: I wore it much longer, and still mourn his loss in my heart.

My regret did not originate in motives of interest. I knew the goodness of the infant his son, and I was certain of the continuance of his protection and liberality; but I wept for the loss of a good, wise, just, and equitable prince. The loss of the Parmesans would have been still more pitiable, if their reigning duke had not repaired their loss by treading in the steps and imitating the virtues of his father. I recollect having spoken of this prince in the same terms in the second part of my Memoirs. I hope this repetition will not be deemed misplaced. We can never say too much when we are rendering honour to truth.

Some days afterwards, I had an opportunity of seeing at Compeigne the count d'Argental, minister plenipotentiary from the court of Parma at Paris. He assured me of the continuance of my pension, and, for my greater convenience, he even arranged that it should be paid at the Parma treasury in Paris.

This is the least of the obligations which I owe to M. d'Argental, the amiable and intelligent friend of M. Voltaire, who has always favoured and protected me. At his table I had always a seat, as well as an admission to the charming entertainments which he gives from time to time in his little private theatre, where I admired the works and the talents for acting of the chevalier de Florian, and the skill and grace of madame de Vimeux.

The Compeigne journey began with an appearance of gaiety, but it terminated with a circumstance of great distress. The dauphin's health grew worse and worse every day. He thought exercise would do him good, but the fatigue completely exhausted him.

I had lost one protector, and I saw myself on the point of loosing another. I became melancholy, and I could find nothing in the situation where I was to enliven me. The forest of Compeigne is superb; but it seemed to me too much trimmed, too uniform, and too remote from the town.

There was a want of society, but everybody was gloomy like myself. I began even to be alarmed for my health. My melancholy was gaining ground on me. I sought for some agreeable relaxation, and I found it at Chantilly.

I returned by this road for Versailles. For two days I enjoyed this delightful castle, which belongs to the prince de Condé. How beautiful and rich! What a happy situation! What an abundance of water! I did not lose my time there. I saw and examined everything—gardens, stables, apartments, pictures, and the cabinet of natural history.

This immense collection of whatever is most wonderful in the three kingdoms of nature is the work of M. Valmont de Bomare; and this celebrated naturalist is the director and demonstrator.

I left Chantilly highly satisfied. My mind was relieved, and I returned to Versailles in such a state as to be capable of discharging my duty at court.

CHAPTER XIV.

Journey to Fontainebleau—A few words respecting that castle and the town—Death of the dauphin—The duke de Berry takes the title of dauphin—My return to Versailles—Sad compliment at my arrival—Death of the dauphiness, of the king of Poland, and the queen of France his daughter—My grievous situation—Present from the princesses—My income fixed—Sayings of the Parisians respecting Versailles—My return to Paris—New literary society—Difficulty of translation—Some of my pieces translated into French—Theatre of an unknown person—Translation of my 'Venetian Advocate,' and of my 'Servant of Two Masters'—Selection of the best Italian pieces—A few words respecting that work—Dialogue between a lady, a gentleman, and myself.

THE court had scarcely returned to Versailles before they began to talk of the journey to Fontainebleau. It was fixed for the 4th of October; but the ill health of the dauphin rendered it a matter of uncertainty.

This amiable and complaisant prince was grieved to think that the king should be deprived of any of his pleasures, and that the inhabitants of Fontainebleau should lose the profits which they were in the habit of deriving from the presence of the court and the influx of strangers. Whenever Fontainebleau was mentioned, notwithstanding his illness, he endeavourd to assume a gaiety, and to appear in good health.

But I was not deceived by this, and there were numbers more who thought as I did. The journey, however, was determined on, and carried into effect accordingly. It would be unjust and unreasonable to suppose that the king and royal family were less interested than others in the health and tranquillity of this prince, in whom their happiness was centered; but it is natural that those who are most concerned about the preservation of any object should not see the

whole of the danger, and they might have flattered themselves that a change of air and amusement might contribute to the health of the patient.

They set out, then, for this castle in the beginning of October. The situation, and the pleasures with which it abounds, rendered this journey delightful for some days.

The different theatrical amusements at Paris were also exhibited by turns, and the authors brought out their new productions there in preference.

We had theatrical entertainments four times a week, and we entered by means of tickets of admission issued by the captain of the guards on duty.

One day I presented one of these tickets at the door, which was not yet opened. As I was one of the first, I reasonably flattered myself with the prospect of choosing my situation. It is impossible to be more squeezed and jostled than I was in entering; and when I got in I found the place full of people, so that I was forced to seat myself on the hindermost bench.

All the audience did not enter by the door at which the tickets were presented. This was enough for me. I adopted another resolution, which I found my account in. I had good acquaintances in the diplomatic body, and I was permitted to enter in the suite of the foreign ministers. In this way I procured a good place, and saw the spectacle at my ease.

The chevalier Gradenigo, the Venetian ambassador, entertained always a great kindness for me. By his means I had the honour to become acquainted with his excellency M. l'Estevenon de Berkenrod, the Dutch ambassador, who has uniformly honoured me with his protection. In this respectable society I passed, very agreeably, much of my time.

In the midst of our gaiety, our pleasures, and amusements, everything changed its appearance before our visit was half over. The dauphin could no longer support with indifference the fire which was internally

consuming him; his courage became useless, his strength abandoned him; he was unable to quit his bed; there was a general consternation; his disease made a most alarming progress, and all the resources of the faculty were exhausted. They then had recourse to prayers, and the archbishop of Sens, now a cardinal, went every day in procession, followed by an immense crowd, to the chapel of the Virgin, at the extremity of the town. They vowed to elevate a temple there, if the intercession of the Mother of God restored the health of the dying prince; but it was written in the decrees of providence that he should now finish his career; and he died at Fontainebleau towards the end of December.

I was in the castle at this fatal moment. The loss was great, and the desolation general. A few minutes after this event took place, I heard "The dauphin, gentlemen!" called out throughout the whole length of the apartments. I was thunderstruck; I neither knew what I was nor where I was. This was occasioned by the duke de Berry, the eldest son of the defunct, who had now become the presumptive heir of the crown, making his appearance, bathed in tears, for the sake of consoling the afflicted people.

This visit, which was to have ended in the middle of November, was prolonged to the end of the year. All were eager to leave the place; I participated in the general feeling; but I gave way to those whose service was more necessary, and set out the last of all.

This year was exceedingly inclement. A great deal of snow fell, and the roads were covered with ice. The horses could not keep their footing; and I took two days and one night in performing a journey which in general does not occupy more than seven hours.

On arriving at Versailles, I was instantly visited by a servant of the keeper of the castle, who, in the name of his master, demanded the key of my apartments from me. On the dauphin's death, the office of accoucheur to the dauphiness became necessarily

suppressed; that princess had no longer any right to dispose of the apartments; I could not therefore enjoy them, and they were apparently destined for some person of more consequence than myself.

I deemed it improper to enter into any conversation on the subject with the man who delivered the message to me, and I sent him away with an answer that I was in want of rest. I turned the subject over in my mind during the night, and, on reflection, I thought, in the present distressing circumstances of the court, it would be indecent in me to prefer complaints or to demand protection. I therefore took lodgings at once in the town, and gave up the key of my apartments.

Italian was no longer thought of by the princesses: however, I durst not remove from Versailles; my finances were in a wretched state; I had received an order for a hundred louis d'ors on the royal treasury; but this was the only thing I had ever received. I was in want of everything, but durst demand nothing.

I saw my august scholars from time to time, and they still looked on me with kindness, but I no longer laboured with them. I knew not how to make my situation known to them, and the princesses were too distressed themselves to think of me. My Italian revenues came but slowly in; my friend Sciugliaga lent me a hundred sequins, and I waited patiently for a time when trouble should give place to serenity.

But the distress was not yet at an end; one misfortune succeeded another. The dauphiness fell a victim to her grief, and was buried in the same grave with her husband. The death of the king of Poland, father to the queen of France, happened some time afterwards, and that of his august daughter filled up the measure of public affliction.

Could I approach the princesses to speak of my own situation? No; and though I could have done so, my heart would not have allowed me; I entertained too much respect for their grief, and I had too

high a confidence in their goodness not to bear my sufferings in silence. I measured my desires by my means, and, with the exception of the hundred sequins, which I owed to a friend, I was in debt to nobody.

The dark clouds began at length to dissipate. The mournings were over, and the court gradually resumed its former amenity. The princesses had the goodness to send for me. I received a present of a hundred louis-d'ors in a box of wrought gold, and a settled provision for me was mentioned.

The princesses demanded for me the titles and emoluments of Italian instructor for the royal family. The minister of Paris and of the court objected to this, which, he said, would be a new office at court, and a new burden on the state. I could have demanded a thousand things, but I demanded nothing, and continued to serve, to want, and to hope. Three years elapsed before my august protectresses could procure me an annual income.

They sent for the minister. "We do not want," said they, "to create a new office for a man who has yet to serve, but to recompence a man who has already served." They demanded six thousand livres a year for me. The minister said it was too much. "I dare say," said he, "M. Goldoni will be contented with four thousand francs." The princesses took him at his word, and the affair was instantly concluded.

I was satisfied. I went to return my thanks to the princesses, who were still more satisfied than myself; and they had the goodness to assure me, that, in one way or other, I should have all their nephews and nieces for scholars, and that the salary which I had obtained was but the commencement of the favours which they hoped I should one day enjoy. If I have not profited by this favour, it has been my own fault; I was ill skilled in asking; I was at court, but I was not a courtier.

The first time my order was paid at the royal

treasury, I only received 3600 livres, 400 being retained for the tax of the twentieth. On speaking, perhaps, I should have obtained an exception from this duty. I said nothing, however, and things have always remained on their old footing.

My income was not very considerable, but I must be just. What had I done to merit it? I had quitted Italy for France. The Italian theatre did not suit me, and my return to Venice was open to me. I became attached, however, to the French nation; three years of an easy, honourable, and agreeable service procured me the pleasure of remaining there. Had I not reason to believe myself fortunate? And had I not reason to be satisfied?

Besides, the princesses told me I should have their nephews for scholars; there were three princes and two princesses. What happy prospects! What well-founded hopes! Was this not enough to satisfy my ambition? Why should I have solicited for offices or commissions to which the natives had a better right than a stranger? I have never demanded any favours either for myself or my nephew, but under circumstances when an Italian was entitled to be preferred to a Frenchman.

As soon as my income was fixed, the princesses gave over the Italian, and employed in other studies the hours formerly destined to me. I was now at liberty to go where I pleased, and I had a wish to return to Paris; but I amused myself tolerably well at Versailles, and I remained there some time longer. It is generally said at Paris that a Versailles life is very dull, that people grow weary there, and know not what to do with themselves. I can prove the contrary; those who are discontented with their situation will find every place wearisome; those who take a delight in their occupation will find themselves as comfortable at Versailles as anywhere else; and those who have nothing to do may employ their mornings usefully or agreeably in the castle, the

public offices, and in the park, and may everywhere find interesting objects and variety of pleasure.

In the afternoon, social amusements are sought after, and they are to be found in proportion at Versailles as well as at Paris, with this difference, that at Paris we frequently lose the company we wish, on account of the distance from one place to another; whereas at Versailles every one is at hand, and poor pedestrians are not under the disagreeable necessity of either remaining at home or ruining themselves in carriages.

It is said that the ladies in the service of the court talk of nothing but their princesses, and that the people in office speak only of the business of their departments. There may be truth in this—"Tractant fabrilia fabri; de tauris tractat arator." All I know is, that I amused myself very well there, and that if it had not been for the theatres, which are only excellent at Paris, I should have perhaps fixed my residence at Versailles.

I regret the friends I left there, whom I still love, and whom I shall continue to love as long as I live. I would willingly name them, for the sake of affording them a proof of my remembrance, and of my esteem and gratitude, but they are too numerous, and it would look as if I wished to introduce their respectable names to gratify my vanity.

I returned to settle at Paris, but I still kept one foot fast at Versailles. It was my interest to pay my court to my august protectresses, and to see whether the Italian literature and language could gain any partisans among the young princes and princesses.

The study of foreign languages is not considered one of the necessary branches of education at the court of France, but as an amusement conceded to those who are desirous of it, and capable of profiting by it. One of the three princes only seemed disposed to learn Italian, and the abbé de Landonviller, of the French academy, had the care of him. The abbé

employed his mode of teaching languages which he published in 1768; he succeeded admirably, and the prince made an astonishing progress.

I was without employment and occupation. During the three years of my service at court I had done nothing, and I was desirous of an occasion to employ my time usefully. MM. de la Place and Favart, two members of our old Dominical society, proposed a new literary society to me: this was a pic-nic at the Wooden Sword, opposite the gallery of the Louvre; a meeting was held every week, the cheer was good, the company able, and our conversations useful.

The following are the names of the members:—M. de la Place; M. Coquelet de Chaussepierre; M. de Veselle; M. Laujon; M. Louis; M. Dorat; M. Colardeau; M. du Doyez; M. Barthe; M. Vernet, and myself.

After some time, the count de Coigny was desirous of honouring our dinners with his presence, and augmenting the pleasure of our conversations; but our meetings did not last long. No person could be introduced without the general consent. One of the members thought proper to bring one of his friends with him, who was not agreeable to all the company. He was a man of merit, but he was the author of a periodical paper, and had displeased some of the society, so that the pic-nic soon ended as well as the Dominical.

I was sorry for it, for it was of great utility to me to live with persons who were perfect masters of their language. I began then to be ambitious of composing something in French, and to prove to those who were unacquainted with Italian, that I occupied a place among dramatic authors; and I was aware of the propriety of either succeeding or not attempting it.

I endeavoured to translate some scenes of my Theatre, but I have never been able to relish translations, and labour seems ever disgusting to me, without the charm of imagination.

Several persons applied to me for permission to translate my comedies under my eyes, agreeably to my opinions, and on condition of sharing the profit. Since my arrival in France up to the present day, a single year has never passed in which two or more translators have not made such a proposition to me. On my arrival in Paris, I even found one person who had the exclusive privilege of translating me, and had published some of his translations. I endeavoured to disgust all of them with an undertaking of which they knew not the difficulties.

The 'Theatre' of an unknown person, a duodecimo volume, published by Duchesne, in 1765, contains three pieces; the title of the first is 'The Generous Waiting Maid,' a comedy of five acts, in verse, imitated from the 'Serva Amorosa' of Goldoni. The second is a mere literal translation of the same piece in prose.

The third and last has the title of 'The Discontented,' which is the same which I gave to my Italian piece, 'I Malcontenti;' some account of which I gave in the second part of my memoirs. I know not whether a Frenchman can read these translations from beginning to end.

There is a dedication prefixed to this volume, which is addressed to a lady who knew more about the subject than the unknown author. She amused herself with translating my 'Venetian Advocate,' and she succeeded much better than the others in this difficult and laborious umdertaking, but she printed only the two first acts of her translation, and this imperfect work would never have seen the light, if her husband, jealous of his wife's glory, had not sent it to the press against her will.

I have seen a tolerable translation of my 'Servant with Two Masters;' a young man, sufficiently acquainted with the Italian language, gave the text accurately, but there was no warmth, no *vis comica*, in the translation, and the Italian witticisms became insipidities in French.

In 1783 there appeared a book intitled 'Selection of the best Pieces of the Modern Italian Theatre,' translated into French, with dissertations and notes, printed by Morin.

The author himself distrusted his powers for the undertaking; the work ought to have been extensive, and he has not put volume the first on the title-page.

He advances in his preliminary discourse, that the Italian dramatic authors are at present in a state to contest the palm of superiority with the French authors—a point which it would be very difficult to prove; he gives a dissertation on spectacles from a modern Italian author, who has merely copied the ancients, and begins his selection with the translation of one of my pieces.

This preference is highly honourable to me, but I am forced to say here, what I told the translator himself, that he has made an unfortunate choice; for were a judgment to be formed of me from that piece, it would not be very much to my advantage.

It is the 'Donna di Garbo,' the translator maintains, which gives me a right to a place among the French rivals in Italy; and this is precisely one of my most indifferent pieces, which has a great deal of the marvellous of the old Italian theatre. It is the most incorrect and improbable of all my comedies; a play, in short, which was extremely successful in Italy, but which ridiculed the prevailing ill taste, and announced the reform which I had in contemplation.

The author of the 'Selection of Italian Pieces' has fallen into a mistake in the translation of the title, which is neither 'The Learned Intriguer' nor 'The Clever Woman,' as we read in his translation. *Una donna di garbo*, in Italian, means a worthy woman, and this is the title I gave it in the second part of these Memoirs.

The principal character in this piece is, it is true, shrewd and intriguing; but she seems an excellent woman in the eyes of the rest of the characters, and,

by way of irony, I gave her from this appearance the title of worthy woman.

I should have pardoned my translator, had he announced that his two titles were a correction of mine, and I could have wished him to have taken greater freedoms in his translation, for the sake of rendering it more supportable to French readers; but in rendering the text word for word, he has fallen into the inconvenience of a trite and insipid style.

This work was not continued, and it was impossible for it to be so. To give us a knowledge of the literature of another country, the thoughts, imagery, and erudition, must be transferred; but then the phrases and style must be adapted to the taste of the nation into whose language the translation is made.

The lessons I gave to others I applied to myself. Instead of translating, I wished to create, to imagine, to invent. I was not yet qualified to attempt a piece in French, but still I could feel my way. I looked out for subjects capable of furnishing me with something new, and one day I believed myself successful; but in this I was mistaken. I received one day an invitation to dine with a very amiable lady, whose establishment was involved in some mystery. I made my appearance at two o'clock, and found her seated by the fire-side with a gentleman who wore long hair, and who belonged neither to the parliament, the châtelet, the court of aids, nor the chamber of accounts, and who was neither a master of requests, nor an advocate, nor an attorney.

The lady introduced me to the gentleman by my name. He expressed something like a wish to rise; I requested him not to put himself to any inconvenience, and he remained in his easy chair accordingly.

I shall proceed to give an account of our conversation; and by way of avoiding the 'said he's' and 'said she's,' I shall give it in the form of a short dialogue between the gentleman, the lady, and myself.

Lady—Sir, you ought to know M. Goldoni by reputation.

Gentleman—Is he not an Italian author?

Lady—Yes, Sir, he is the Molière of Italy. *(The exaggeration of a kind and polite female must be excused.)*

Gentleman—That is singular enough. Is the gentleman's name also Molière?

Lady (laughing)—Did not I tell you his name was Goldoni?

Gentleman—Well, what is there laughable in that? Was not the French author called Poquelin de Molière?. and why may not the Italian be also called Goldoni de Molière? *(Turning towards me.)* The lady is clever, but she is a woman, and somewhat opinionated; but I must correct her.

Lady (in a blunt tone)—Well, well, hold your tongue.

Gentleman (to the lady)—O, you are everything that is amiable, admirable, divine. *(Then turning towards me.)* Sir, you are an author; you are an Italian, you must know an Italian piece . . . a piece . . . which I shall name to you . . . It is . . . it is . . . I have forgotten the title . . . but that does not signify. In this comedy there is a pantaloon . . . there is a . . . a harlequin . . . there is a doctor, a brighella . . . You must know what I allude to . . .

Goldoni—If you have no other marks of distinction to give me . . . .

Lady—Gentlemen, dinner is ready; let us proceed. *(The gentleman offered to attend the lady to her seat, she takes my arm.)*

Gentleman—You refuse me, madam, but I do not adore you the less. *(We sat down to dinner. The gentleman seated himself beside the lady, and laid hold of the large spoon.)*

Gentleman—What, madam, do you give bread soup to an Italian?

Lady—What would you have me give?

Gentleman (helping round the soup)—Maccaroni, maccaroni. The Italians eat only maccaroni.

Lady—You are ridiculous, Monsieur de la Clo . . .

Gentleman (to the lady)—Silence.

Lady (a little irritated)—What do you mean, sir? You are very rude to-day.

Gentleman—Silence, my beauty; silence, my adorable . . .

Goldoni—Am I not to know the name of the gentleman with whom I have the honour to dine?

Gentleman (to me)—It is useless, sir, I am incognito here.

Lady—What mean you by *incognito*, Monsieur de la Cloche? . . . You are neither in an inn here, nor in an improper place. Nobody but respectable people enter my house, and I hope this will be the last time you ever set your foot in it.

This lady, who was possessed of a sense of propriety, and a great deal of sensibility, but whose character, unfortunately, was not altogether immaculate, conceived the young blockhead meant to affront her, and she burst into tears, and felt indisposed. The waiting-maid came to her assistance, and conducted her to her apartment. The gentleman wished to follow her, but the door was shut in his face.

I quitted the table; the weather was cold, and I went into the parlour to warm myself. The gentleman, who was piqued in his turn, walked backward and forward, and threw himself sometimes on a sofa, and sometimes into an easy chair.

It was distressing to see the manner in which he spoiled very elegant furniture with his hair.

I knew not what to do; I had not dined; I applied to the gentleman to know whether he meant to stay or go. "You Italians are fortunate," said he, "your women are your slaves; but here we spoil them; we are wrong in flattering them and treating them with such forbearance."

"Sir," said I, "women are respected in Italy as

well as in France, especially when they are amiable, like this lady; she is vexed; I am heartily sorry at it; I am grieved beyond measure."—"O that is nothing," said he, "you will see her soon make her appearance again."

He went to the bed-room door, knocked and called; the door opened, and the waiting-maid appeared. "My mistress," said she, "has gone to bed, and will see nobody again to-day." On this she shut the door, and hurt the hand of the long-robed gentleman who wished to enter.

He cursed and threatened; and then turning towards me—"Come," said he, "let us dine somewhere." I was as much in want of dinner as himself, and we went out together and crossed the Palais Royal. The gentleman saw two wenches walking in the thickets. He wished to go after them, and to prevail on me to accompany him. I refused, and he went by himself, and left me there. I dined with the Swiss, and felt no small satisfaction at getting so well rid of him.

I took care to enter this original in my memorandum-book; not for the purpose of exposing him on the stage, but to fill a void in conversation.

CHAPTER XV.

Conversation next day with the lady mentioned in the preceding chapter—'The Loves of Zelinda and Lindor,' 'The Jealousy of Lindor,' 'The Uneasiness of Zelinda,' 'The Timid Lovers,' 'The Good and Bad Genius,' a piece with machinery, in five acts—Its success—My nephew elected professor of the Italian language at the Royal Military School, and, some time afterwards, translating secretary in the Corsican office—Departure of M. Gradenigo, the Venetian ambassador—Suppression of the public entries of ordinary ambassadors—The chevalier Mocenigo, the new Venetian ambassador—My correspondence with the undertakers of the opera at London—'Victorina,' a comic opera—'The King a-hunting,' another comic opera for Venice—A few details respecting the actors and authors of the comic opera of Paris—Sketch of a small piece in two acts, entitled 'La Bouillotte'—Reasons for not giving it.

I SENT next day to enquire how the lady was with whom I had not dined. She was well, and requested to see me. I went accordingly the same day. She made many apologies for what had taken place the day before, and I found her very well pleased at having got rid of a man whom she disliked. He belonged to Provence, and assumed a right of control over a person who happened to be born on one of the possessions of his illustrious family.

As the lady belonged to a province of the south of France, she had great facility in pronouncing Italian, and was passionately fond of that language.

Our conversation happened to turn on the Italian theatre of Paris. She expressed a regret that I had quitted it, and put me in mind of some of my outlines, which had given her great pleasure.

She mentioned, among others, those pieces which in reality had been successful, 'The Loves of Har-

lequin and Camilla,' 'The Jealousy of Harlequin,' and 'The Uneasiness of Camilla:' three pieces which followed one another, and which formed a sort of comic romance, divided into three parts, each of which contained a separate and complete subject.

This lady, who was possessed of abilities, intelligence, and taste, convinced me that I was wrong in losing three pieces, which, if the dialogues were written out would do me great honour. I thanked her, and took her advice.

I was asked in Italy for comedies; I wrote out the three outlines above-mentioned; but as in the company which was to play them there was no harlequin of the merit of Carlin or Sacchi, I gave a degree of elevation to the subject. I supplied the places of harlequin and the waiting-maid with two persons of the middle rank of life, reduced to the necessity of becoming servants from unfortunate circumstances; and I called these three pieces 'The Loves of Zelinda and Lindor,' 'The Jealousy of Lindor,' and 'The Uneasiness of Zelinda.'

These three comedies were not very successful at Venice, but they were well received by an enlightened public, better pleased with the composition than the execution. I knew nothing of the actors by whom they were to be represented; the parts were distributed as well as they could, and in Italy there are no doubles or triples as at Paris, for the purpose of adapting the characters to those who are the best qualified to support them.

The same thing happened to another piece which I sent to Venice also the same year. This was, 'Gli Amanti timidi, o l'Imbroglio de due Ritratti;' 'The Timid Lovers, or the Confusion occasioned by two Portraits.'

This comedy, in two acts, which, under the title of 'The Portrait of Harlequin,' was extremely successful at the Italian theatre of Paris, did not succeed in the same way at Venice.

There were four pieces in all which had pleased in

France, and met with an indifferent reception in Italy. They proceeded, however, from an author who had long been so fortunate as to please in his own country; but this author was in France, and his works began to feel the influence of climate. The genius was the same, but the style and turn of expression were changed.

I was sorry that I could not satisfy my countrymen, who continued to love me, and who never gave over playing my old pieces, and asking for new ones.

I was aware that, after my departure, the Venetian companies had undergone changes; that the zeal and the method of my time were no longer the same, and that the success of a piece of character or sentiment was less secure than at that period. I instantly resolved to send a piece in a style which was not altogether my own, and nothing could equal the success it had.

In the course of the two years of my engagement with the Italian actors, I offered them a showy piece, the title of which was 'The Good and Bad Genius.'

They found no objection to the subject, which was at once moral, critical, and entertaining; but they cried out against the decorations which it required, and which would have cost only a hundred crowns in Italy, but a thousand crowns, perhaps, at Paris.

The comic opera imagined the expense useless for the Italians, and the latter, who shared with the comic opera, were not at all displeased at the saving.

In the theatrical almanac of Paris, 'The Good and Bad Genius' is styled a piece with machinery, in five acts, and not represented. I know not how a comedy, which was not even received, happens to be inserted in this catalogue; this is apparently a compliment from the editor of the Almanac, who, to do me honour, has mentioned the twenty-three pieces which I composed for the Italians in the course of two years.

I knew that the fairy system had assumed its old ascendancy at Venice, and I conceived 'The Good

and Bad Genius' a piece still more adapted to the taste of Italy than of France.

I hesitated a long time, however, before I could determine on sending it; my conscience reproached me with attempting to encourage a bad taste in a country where I had laboured for the establishment of a good one: but the indifferent reception of my last pieces chagrined me: I wished to please my countrymen once more, I yielded to the temptation, and profited by the circumstance.

This comedy, however, did not fall into the extravagances of the old pieces where machinery is introduced. The only thing marvellous was the removal of the actors in a few moments from one region to another by the two genii. All the rest was natural.

It had the greatest success at Venice, and alone filled the theatre of Saint John Chrysostom for thirty or forty days in succession. The carnival was opened and closed with it.

I amused myself at Paris in examining the beauties of the town, and dedicating a few hours every day to my study; but that which occupied me most seriously was my nephew.

I brought him with me to France, knowing the utility of travelling in education, when a young man has the means of learning, and his conduct is attended to.

On arriving in Paris, I did not think I should fix my residence there; but having decided on remaining, it became necessary to endeavour to procure some situation for my brother's son, whom I loved as if he were my own. He was kind and docile; he had gone through his studies at Venice; he was fit for some good employment; I was not rich enough to purchase an office for him, and I wished to avoid, if possible, the unpleasant circumstance of entering into competition for favours with the French.

There was a professor of the Italian language in the royal military school; M. Conti, who filled that situa-

tion, was my friend; he wished to retire, but he was not entitled to a pension till he had served twenty years, and he could not, therefore, demand it. The employment was good; it was an eligible situation for a young man; I was anxious that my nephew should obtain it, but there were difficulties to be overcome.

I implored the protection of madame Adelaide of France; that princess recommended me to the duke de Choiseul, and in fifteen days time M. Conti received his pension, and my nephew his place.

By this means I had opportunities of seeing at my ease two establishments worthy of the magnificence of the French monarchs, the royal military school and the hospital for invalids, the cradle and the grave of the defenders of their country.

The nobility destined to the military life are educated in the former, and the aged and wounded in war are relieved in the other; the arts and sciences, and everything that is useful in education, form the young minds in the one; in the other, attention, repose, and all the comforts of life, are enjoyed by the veterans, as a recompence for their past services. This last establishment was founded in the reign of Louis XIV; the other in the reign of Louis XV.

The hospital for invalids is decorated with a magnificent temple, which would hold an honourable rank even in Rome; and the four great refectories of the soldiers are as curious as the kitchens in which the food for these worthy persons is cooked.

It afforded me great pleasure to pass a few days in these two royal establishments, which are so close to one another, and of which I knew the governors and principal persons employed; but after my nephew had been there twenty-two months, considerable changes were made in the military school; the humanity classes were transferred to the college of la Flêche, and the Italian class was altogether suppressed. This was not owing to the fault of the professor, who was recompensed with a pension of six hundred francs.

I was told that the duke de Choiseul was aware of these projected changes when he gave the place to my nephew, and that he conferred on us an employment which would be suppressed, for the sake of procuring us this little favour.

This minister, considering me as under the protection of the princesses, manifested great kindness for me; he did me the honour to tell me, when I called on him to return him my thanks:—"Your nephew's affairs are now in a good way; how are your own?" I answered him, I enjoyed an income of 3,600 livres per annum. He began to laugh. "This is no income," said he; "we must have something else for you; we must take care of you." I have never, however, had anything farther; but this is my own fault; I must return to the burden of my song: I was at court, but not a courtier.

My nephew, who was without any employment, laboured with me till something else should turn up. The maxim which I had adopted, and with which I had inspired him, never to mix in the herd of competitors, rendered success more difficult.

I was intimate at Versailles with M. Genet, the head and director of the office for translation, to which he gave a new form, and a solid consistency, and which was placed entirely under his controul.

This respectable father, who divided his time between the duties of his office and the education of his children, recollecting that I had once done him a slight service, took an opportunity of recompensing me for it.

Since the acquisition of Corsica, an office had been established at Versailles for the affairs of that island, and an interpreter well acquainted with the two languages was wanted. The gentleman at the head of this office applied to M. Genet to procure one for him; my worthy friend, mindful of me, proposed my nephew, who was accepted and introduced without any difficulty.

This young man seemed destined to encounter nothing but reforms and suppressions. The office for Corsica was abolished shortly afterwards; the affairs of finance were given to the comptroller general, and the civil administration was transferred to the war department.

The interpreter was transferred there. This inspection was annexed to the office of M. Campi, principal secretary for controverted affairs. My nephew endeavours to render himself useful: he is fortunate enough to please his superiors, from whom he has received various proofs of kindness. If my journey to France had been productive of no other advantage than that of settling this dear youth, I should still be pleased with having undertaken it.

I was attached to France from inclination, and I became still more strongly so through gratitude. The chevalier Gradenigo, the Venetian ambassador, notwithstanding his anxiety for my accepting the propositions of his countrymen, could not but approve of my resistance, and undertook to justify me with his friends and my protectors.

This minister's commission was nearly at an end; the embassies of the republic last only four years. M. Gradenigo was beloved by the court and ministry of France, who were desirous that he should remain some time longer. The king was even disposed to apply for his stay, and the minister had a courier in readiness to dispatch for that purpose. The ambassador felt the utmost respect and gratitude for these marks of honour, but he could not give his consent; the laws of the republic are immutable; the successor was on his way; M. Gradenigo had therefore no option, and was obliged to set out, and the preparations for his audience of leave were far advanced.

The duke de Choiseul, minister for foreign affairs, deemed this ceremony costly, troublesome, and entirely useless, and the king was of the same opinion. M. Gradenigo was installed a knight or chevalier by

his majesty, without the usual pomp, and he paid his visits to the royal family and the princes of the blood as a private individual. This is the era of the suppression of public audiences for ordinary ambassadors.

This ambassador was succeeded by the chevalier Sebastian Mocenigo, who came from Spain, whither he was dispatched on his first embassy by the republic of Venice. He was of a very illustrious, ancient, and rich family; he was clever, intelligent, amiable, a good musician, and sung charmingly. But . . . . he experienced some things of an unpleasant nature, which he did not perhaps deserve.

I was invited to London, the only place in Europe which can dispute precedency with Paris, and I should have liked to have seen it; but I heard great marriages talked of at Versailles, and as I had been at all the funerals of the court, I wished not to be absent in a time of rejoicing.

Besides, I was not asked for by the king of England, but by the managers of the opera, who were anxious to attach me to it.

I endeavoured, however, to turn the favourable opinion which they entertained of me to some account; I assigned good reasons by way of excuse, and I offered them my services on condition of remaining in France.

My proposition was accepted. They asked me for a new comic opera, and employed me to arrange all the old dramas which they had adopted for the current year.

They said nothing respecting my recompense, and I did not mention it. I applied myself to the work; the English were satisfied with me; I was highly pleased with their return.

This correspondence was continued for several years, and an end was not put to it till the directors were succeeded by others, on which occasion I received an unequivocal mark of their satisfaction, as they paid me for an opera which it was impossible for

them then to use. This direction was in the hands of women, and women are amiable in every country.

The most agreeable and finished work which I sent to them was, in my opinion, a comic opera, intitled 'Victorina;' and I received from London compliments and thanks without end on account of it. M. Piccini, who set it to music, wrote to me from Naples, that he never read a comic drama from which he derived so much pleasure. The success, however, did not correspond with the prepossession of the directors or my own.

It requires the union of a number of beauties to insure the success of a piece, and the slightest accident may occasion its condemnation.

I was more fortunate at Venice, whither I sent a comic opera nearly at the same time, with the title of 'The King a-hunting.' The subject of this piece was the same as that of 'The King and Farmer of Sedaine,' and 'The Hunting Party of Henry the Fourth,' by M. Collé.

The works of these two French authors appear to be imitations of 'The King and the Miller of Mansfield,' an English comedy; but the true source of all of them is to be found in 'The Alcaide de Zalamea,' a Spanish comedy by Calderon.

In the piece of the Spanish author there is a great deal of intrigue: a daughter violated, a father revenged, an officer strangled, and the alcaide is judge and party and executioner at the same time.

In that of the English author, we find philosophy, politics, and criticism, but too much simplicity, and very little action.

The author of 'The Hunting Party of Henry the Fourth,' produced a very instructive and interesting work. Whatever relates to this good king is sure to please the French, and to receive general approbation.

M. Sedaine has more action and gaiety in his: I was present at its first representation, and was very much pleased with it. I was grieved to see it on the

point of being condemned: it recovered gradually, and justice was done to it. It had an infinite number of representations, and is still seen with pleasure.

It must also be owned that M. Sedaine was well seconded by the musician: I do not boast of being a connoisseur, but my ear is my guide.

I think the music of M. Monsigny expressive, harmonious, and agreeable: I am enchanted with his designs, accompaniments, and modulations, and had I composed comic operas in French, I should have certainly applied to this musician. But I cannot comprehend how it has happened, that while I have composed forty or fifty comic operas for Italy, and several for England, Germany, and Portugal, I have never been able to compose one for Paris.

Sometimes I see at this theatre serious and pathetic dramas with the title of comedies, and the actors weeping while they sing, and sighing in cadence: sometimes pieces with the title of shews (parades), and which would in reality be nothing but shew, were it not for the charms of the music and the skill of the actors.

Sometimes I see bagatelles, seemingly destitute of meaning, extolled to the skies; and at other times, well-written pieces fail, because the subject is too melancholy for tears, or not sufficiently gay to elicit laughter.

What are the precepts of the comic opera? What are its rules?—It has none. All is done by routine: I know from experience, and ought to be believed: *experto crede Roberto.*

Shall I be told that the Italian comic operas are mere farces, unworthy of being put in comparison with the poems which go by that name in France? Let those who know the Italian language, give themselves the trouble of going over the six volumes which contain the collection of my works of this nature, and they will see, perhaps, that the subjects and the style are not so contemptible.

They are not, it is true, good dramas, but they are capable of being made so. I never thought of composing any from taste or choice, and I never laboured on them but from motives of complaisance or interest. When we are possessed of talents, we must turn them to some account; a history-painter will not refuse to draw a baboon, if he be well paid for it.

Notwithstanding this sort of aversion which I have for comic operas, I own that those of the Italian theatre of Paris give me great pleasure.

I can discover the superiority of the French authors in this department as in every other. MM. Marmontel, Laujon, Favart, Sedaine, and d'Hell, have given to the comic opera all the perfection of which it is susceptible.

MM. Philidor, Monsigni, Duni, Gretri, Martini, and Duseides have adorned them with excellent music, and M. Piccini has latterly given fresh proofs of the superiority of his talents in his music for his son's words.

The actors are increasing every day in number, zeal, and merit. M. Clairval is still the same; he is an immortal actor: madame Trial has succeeded madame la Rutte, and possesses every possible charm; mademoiselle Colombe and mademoiselle Adeline, her sister, are an honour to Italy, which gave them birth; the one from her excellent voice, and the other from the delicacy of her acting. Madame du Gazon is the delight of that theatre; and mademoiselle Renaud, at fifteen years of age, from her singing and natural graces, is an ornament to her profession, and announces talents for acting which time only can develop.

I was present, a year ago, at the debut of mademoiselle Rinaldi: she was highly applauded; the Journal de Paris said, next day, everything that was flattering in praise of her; she was engaged immediately; but, since her debut, she has never once appeared on the stage. This may be owing to the number of beginners who have been received; but it is

to be hoped that mademoiselle Rinaldi will in turn fill one of the departments at the theatre, and that justice will be done to her talents, her morals, and her conduct.

The Italian theatre is as fortunate in actors as authors, and all are well treated and well recompensed. The poets and musicians enjoy the ninth of the receipts for a piece of five or three acts; the twelfth for a piece of two acts, and the eighteenth for a piece of one act; besides, two annual pensions have been established at the Italian theatre, one for the author of the words, and another for the author of the music of the greatest merit.

At this theatre, authors enjoy another considerable advantage; they never lose the right to their pieces; they always enjoy the fixed share; they give tickets gratis for every representation of their works; and the pieces which have not been refused by the public, are placed in the repertory of the week; so that they never fall.

In consequence of these advantages, I have been more than once tempted to yield to the solicitations of several musicians, who frequently, very frequently, almost every day indeed, asked me for some work for the comic opera: after much thinking, revising, and thoroughly examining, I imagined I had fallen upon the routine necessary to please the French, and I composed a small piece, in two acts, called the 'Bouillotte.'

This word is not to be found in any dictionary, but it is well known at Paris; it is a game at cards, a brelan at five, the tricks of which are neither fixed nor marked. He who loses his stake, goes out and is succeeded by another; in these parties of bouillotte, there are generally three or four persons, who do not play at first, who wait for the going out of the unfortunate before they begin playing, and all go out successfully. This perpetual movement, and the number of people interested in the same game, occasion a sort

of agitation or boiling (bouillonnement), which has given rise to the name bouillotte.

So long as nothing more than dialogue was necessary, I succeeded tolerably well; and I thought I might venture my prose on a theatre where the public are indulgent to strangers. But in a comic opera, airs were necessary, and good music required good poetry. I knew the mechanism of French versification. I had surmounted all the difficulties which a foreign ear must experience, and I had selected good models for imitation. I set myself to work, and composed couplets, quatrains, whole airs; and after all the pains taken by me, I saw that my muse in a French dress, had not that fire, that grace and facility, which an author acquires in his youth, and brings to perfection in his mature years. I became sensible of my imperfections, and gave up my work; and I renounced for ever the charms of French poetry.

I might have confided my subject to some one who would have perhaps taken the charge of the versification; but then to whom could I apply? An author of the first rank would have changed my plan, and an inferior author would have spoiled it.

Besides, it was a trifle which I did not care much for, and I soon forgot it. I found it in the rummaging among my papers which my Memoirs occasion me to make; and as I communicate all my productions to my readers, I make it a point of conscience not to conceal this abortion.

If any of my readers deem this subject worthy of his attention, I leave him full power to do with it what he pleases; and if he will have the goodness to consult me, I shall tell him sincerely my opinion, even at the risk of displeasing him, which has happened to me more than once under similar circumstances.

Beware, my friends, of those young people, those inferior authors who come to consult you. They do not want your advice, but compliments and applauses. If you endeavour to correct them, you will soon see

with what obstinacy they maintain their opinions, and what a colouring they give to their faults; and if you persist, they at last conclude you to be a fool.

CHAPTER XVI.

Marriage of the dauphin—Opening of the great court theatre—Observations on that monument—Crowd of poets on this occasion—'The Surly Benefactor' ('Bourru Bienfaisant') a comedy, in three acts, in prose—Its success—Justice done to the actors by whom it was executed—Conversation with J. J. Rousseau on the subject—Anecdotes respecting J. J. Rousseau—Some reflections on the same subject.

In the preceding chapter, I announced that preparations for great marriages were making at court. I was speaking of the year 1770, a time when the archduchess of Austria, Marie-Antoinette of Loraine, came as a dauphiness to fill this kingdom with joy, glory, and hope.

By the qualities of her head and her heart, she gained the esteem of the king, the affection of her husband, the friendship of the royal family, and, by her beneficence, she merited the public admiration.

This virtue, which in our days has become the ruling passion of Frenchmen, seems to have excited an emulation in souls possessed of sensibility from the example set by that august princess.

These nuptials were celebrated with a pomp worthy of the grandson of the French monarch and the daughter of the empress of Germany.

I saw the richly decorated temple, the majestic view of the royal banquet, the ball in the gallery, and the gaming parties in the apartments.

There were illuminations every where, and fire-

works of the greatest beauty. Torré, an Italian artificer, on this occasion, carried the pyrotechnical art to the highest perfection.

The new court-theatre was opened at the same time. It is a superb building, but the architecture is more majestic than convenient for the spectators. It ought to be seen when dress or masked balls are given. The theatre, on these occasions, is decorated with the same ornaments as the rest of the house, and the whole forms an immense saloon, enriched with columns, looking-glasses, and gildings, which prove the grandeur of the sovereign by whom it was ordered, and the taste of the artist by whom it was executed.

In the rejoicings on this august marriage, the French poets made court and city resound with their songs. My muse was desirous of awaking; I endeavoured to do something also; and I composed Italian verses, but I did not dare to print them.

Among the infinite number of compositions which appeared every day, some were excellent, while others were not so much as read. I was unwilling to augment the number of the latter, and I presented my verses in manuscript. The dauphiness received them with kindness, and gave me to understand, in very good Italian, that I was not unknown to her.

It would seem that the happy star which then shed its influence over this kingdom, inspired me with zeal, ambition, and courage. I then conceived the project of composing a French comedy; and I had the temerity to offer it to the French theatre.

The word temerity is not too strong on this occasion: for must it not be regarded in this light, that I, a stranger, who had never set foot in France till the age of fifty-three, with merely a confused and superficial knowledge of that language, should venture, after a lapse of nine years, to compose a piece for the principal theatre of the nation?

You are aware, I suppose, my reader, that I am speaking of 'The Surly Benefactor,' ('Bourru Beni-

faisant,') a fortunate piece, which crowned my labours, and set the seal to my reputation.

It was given for the first time at Paris on the 4th of November 1771, and next day at Fontainebleau; and it had the same success at the court and in the city. I received a gratification of 150 louis-d'ors from the king, and my right of authorship brought me in a handsome sum at Paris. My bookseller treated me with great liberality, and I was overpowered with honour, pleasure, and joy. I tell the truth, and make no concealment; false modesty is as odious in my eyes as vanity. I will not attempt any extracts from a comedy which is everywhere acted, and in everybody's hands. I cannot help expressing here some marks of gratitude to the actors, who contributed infinitely to the success of my work.

It is impossible to represent the part of the surly benefactor with more truth than M. Preville displayed. This inimitable actor, gay by nature, and of a lively physiognomy, contrived so well to overcome his native disposition, and his usual style of acting, that the sourness of character, and the goodness of heart of the protagonist were visible in all his looks and motions.

M. Bellecour could more easily support the character of Dorval, which was as phlegmatic as that of the actor himself; but he displayed all the intelligence and refinement which were necessary to exhibit the character to advantage, and formed a wonderful contrast to the vivacity of Geronte.

The part of Delancour was not important enough for the superior talents of M. Molé; he took it through complaisance, and gave it up a few days afterwards; but on the death of M. Bellecour, he succeeded to the part of Dorval, which he represented with the utmost perfection. I had already a high opinion of M. Molé, but I honestly own, that on this occasion he filled me with surprise. I had seen him surpass all other actors in brilliant characters, in vigorous passions, in interest-

ing situations, and I was quite astonished, therefore, to see him assume the tone, the gesture, and the sang froid of a personage so opposite to his own and to his taste. This is really being a great actor.

The part of madame Dalancour, acted by madame Preville, was new on the stage, and not easy to sustain, but nothing was difficult to an actress of her merit. She played equally well the coquet, the artless girl, and the clever woman.

Mademoiselle Doligny gave in this piece new proofs of her talents, her zeal, and her precision. It is impossible to represent with more truth and grace a young, decent, and timid girl, under the influence of love.

Madame Bellecour, with her natural gaiety, and the refinement of her action, made the most of the part of the gouvernante; and M. Feuilli, in the comparatively inferior character of the valet, received an equal share of the public applause.

All the actors were attached to this piece from its first reading. The reception or rejection of a piece takes place at the French theatre by means of secret notes, subscribed by the different members. All the notes on this occasion were full of praises of me and my work; the public judgment has proved the accuracy of that of the actors, and warrants me in concluding, that, if they sometimes receive inferior pieces, they act in such cases against their internal conviction from a deference to authority.

My comedy could not have been more successful. I had been fortunate enough to find in nature a character every day to be met with, which, however, had escaped the vigilance of ancient and modern authors.

They imagined, perhaps, that a rude and surly individual, from the inconvenience which he occasions to society, would be disgusting on the stage; and, considering the character in this point of view, they have acted wisely in not bringing it forward. I should

have followed their example, had other views not inspired me with the hope of turning it to account.

The beneficence constitutes the principal object of my piece; and the vivacity of the beneficent individual furnishes the comic humour which is inseparable from comedy.

Beneficence is a virtue of the soul; roughness is but a constitutional defect; both are compatible in the same subject; on these principles I formed my plan, and the sensibility of my protagonist was what alone rendered him supportable.

On the first representation of my comedy, I concealed myself, as I had always done in Italy, behind the curtain; I saw nothing, but I heard my actors and the applauses of the public; I stalked backwards and forwards during the whole time of the play, quickening my steps in passages of interest and passion, satisfied with the actors, and echoing the applauses of the public.

At the conclusion of the play, I heard clapping of hands and shouts of applause without end. M. Dauberval, who was to conduct me to Fontainebleau, arrived. I imagined he came to urge my departure; but he came for a very different purpose. "Come, sir," said he, "you must exhibit yourself." "Exhibit myself! to whom?"—"To the public, which calls for you."—"No, no, friend, let us take our departure with all expedition; I could not support". . . . Here M. le Kain and M. Brizard laid hold of me, and dragged me on the stage.

I had seen authors undergo a similar ceremony with courage; but I was not accustomed to it. In Italy, poets are not called to appear on the stage for the purpose of being complimented by the audience; I could not conceive how a man could, as it were, say tacitly to the spectators, "Here I am, gentlemen, ready for your applause."

After supporting for several seconds a situation of

the greatest constraint and singularity, I at last retired and crossed the stage to gain the coach which was in waiting for me. I met numbers of people who were seeking me. I distinguished no one; I accompanied my guide, and entered the coach, in which my wife and nephew were already seated. At the success of my piece, they wept for joy, and at the account of my appearance on the stage they were ready to die of laughter.

I was fatigued, and required some repose; I wanted sleep; my soul was satisfied and my mind tranquil; I should have passed a happy night in bed, but in the carriage I closed my eyes and was awaked again every moment by the jostling. In short, after a good deal of dozing, talking, and yawning, I arrived at Fontainebleau, where I immediately went to bed. After dining, and a short walk, I repaired to the castle to witness the representation of my piece, and kept always behind the curtain.

I have spoken of its success at court. It was not allowable at that time to applaud in presence of the king; but it was easy to see, from the movement and the countenances of the spectators, the effect which the piece produced on them.

Next day, the marshal de Duras did me the honour to present me privately to the king in his closet. His majesty and all the royal family bestowed on me fresh proofs of their usual liberality.

I returned to Paris to witness the second representation of my piece. That day, several symptoms of ill-humour were exhibited in the pit. I was in my usual place. M. Feuilli came down and told me not to be uneasy, for it was nothing but a cabal. "What!" said I, "there was nothing of this kind at the first representation." "Those who are now jealous were not then afraid of you," said the actor, "they laughed at the idea of a foreigner attempting to write a French comedy, and the cabal was not then organized; but

you have nothing to fear," added he, "the blow has taken effect, and your success is certain."

In reality, the piece met with increasing success till the twelfth representation, when it was withdrawn by the actors and myself, for the sake of reproducing it in a more advantageous season.

Nobody said anything against my play, but it was the subject of much conversation. Some said it was a piece of my Italian theatre; others thought I had written it in Italian and translated it into French. The collection of my works may convince the former of the contrary, and I shall now proceed to undeceive the latter, if there still be any who retain that opinion.

I not only composed my piece in French, but I thought in the French manner when engaged in it. It has the stamp of its origin in the thoughts, in the imagery, in the manner, and in the style.

Two different translations of it have been made in Italy; they are not badly executed on the whole, but they do not resemble the original. I have myself endeavoured, for my own amusement, to translate some of the scenes, but I felt all the ungratefulness of the task, and the difficulty of success. There are certain phrases and modes of speaking which lose all their spirit in translation.

For instance, in the seventeenth scene of the second act, the words 'young man' are pronounced by Angelica, and there is no equivalent expression in the Italian language. 'Il giovine' is too low, too much beneath the situation of Angelica. 'Il giovinetto' would sound too coquettish in the mouth of a decent and timid girl; to translate this expression, a periphrasis becomes necessary, and a periphrasis would throw too much light on the suspended meaning, and completely spoil the scene.

The characters of Monsieur and Madame Delancour are conceived and executed with a delicacy which is only known in France; these are the two personages

of my whole work which do me the greatest honour. A wife who ruins her husband without even suspecting it—a husband who deceives his wife through attachment—are beings who exist, and who are not seldom to be met with in families; I have employed them by way of episode, and I could have made principal parts of them, not inferior, in point of novelty, to the 'Surly Benefactor.'

I wrote then and conceived this piece in French, but I was not so bold as to produce it without consulting persons capable of affording me both correction and instruction. I even availed myself of their opinions.

Nearly about this time M. Rousseau, of Geneva, returned to Paris. Every person was eager to see him, but he was not visible to all. I knew him only by reputation, but I had a strong desire to converse with him, and would gladly have shewn my piece to a man so well acquainted with the French literature and language.

It was necessary to inform him beforehand, to ensure a favourable reception; I therefore adopted the resolution of writing to him, and expressing my desire to form an acquaintance with him. He returned a very polite answer, informing me that he never left his home or went anywhere, but that, if I would give myself the trouble to climb four pair of stairs in the hotel Plâtrière, in the street Plâtrière, it would be doing him a great pleasure. I accepted the invitation, and called on him a few days afterwards.

I will here give an account of my conversation with the citizen of Geneva. The result is not, indeed, very interesting; my piece was only mentioned incidentally, and without alluding to any consequences; but I avail myself of this opportunity of mentioning this extraordinary man, who possessed talents of the very highest order, with incredible prejudices and weaknesses.

I ascended to the fourth story of the house he

described. On knocking, the door was opened by a woman who was neither young, nor pretty, nor prepossessing.

I asked if M. Rousseau was at home? "He is, and he is not," said the woman, whom at most I took for his housekeeper, and who asked my name. On giving it, she said—"You were expected, sir; and I shall instantly announce you to my husband."

On entering, a moment afterwards, I discovered the author of 'Emilius' busied in copying music. This I was previously informed of, and I saw it with silent indignation. He received me in a frank and friendly manner, and as he rose he held out some sheets to me, and said, "See, sir, if anybody can copy music like me; I defy any one to show anything from the press divided as beautifully and exactly as I do it; come, let us warm ourselves," he continued, and with one step we were close to the fire.

The fire was low, and he demanded fresh wood, which was brought in by madame Rousseau. I rose and offered my chair to her. "Do not disturb yourself," said the husband, "my wife has her concerns to attend to."

My heart was grieved to see a man of letters employed as a copyist, and his wife acting as a servant. It was a painful spectacle for me, and I could neither conceal my astonishment nor my pain, though I said nothing. As he was not wanting in penetration, he perceived that something was passing in my mind; he questioned me, and I was forced to tell him the cause of my silence and astonishment.

"What!" said he, "you pity me because I am employed in copying? You imagine that I should be better employed in composing books for people incapable of reading them, and supplying articles to unprincipled journalists? You are mistaken; I am passionately fond of music; I copy from excellent originals; this enables me to live, and serves to amuse me; and what more should I have. But what are

you yourself doing?" continued he. "You came to France to labour for the Italian comedians, who are lazy fellows, and do not want your pieces. Return again to your own country; I know that you are wished for, that you are expected" . . . .

"Sir," said I, interrupting him, "you are in the right, I ought to have quitted Paris in consequence of the carelessness of the Italian actors, but other views have detained me. I have been composing a piece in French."—"You have composed a piece in French?," said he, with an air of astonishment, "and what do you mean to do with it?"—"Give it to the theatre."—"To what theatre?"—"To the French theatre."—"You were reproaching me just now with losing my time, but you seem to be losing yours without any benefit whatever."—"My piece is received."—"Is it possible? I am not, however, astonished at it; the actors are destitute even of common sense; they receive and reject merely at random; it is received, perhaps, but it will not be acted; and so much the worse for you if it be played."—"How can you form any judgment of a piece with which you are unacquainted?"—"I know the taste of both the Italians and the French; they are too dissimilar, and, with your permission, your age is not the time to begin to write and to compose in a foreign language"—"Your reflections are just, sir, but these difficulties may be surmounted. I confided my work to men of abilities and theatrical experience, who appeared satisfied with it."—"They merely flatter and deceive you; you will be their dupe. Show me your piece; I am sincere and honest, and will tell you the truth."

This was precisely what I was aiming at, not for the sake of consulting him, but to see whether he would persist, after reading my piece, in his want of confidence in me. The manuscript was in the hands of the copyist of the French theatre, and I promised to M. Rousseau that he should have a sight of it as soon as it was returned to me. My intention was to

keep my word with him, and I shall explain why I did not do so.

There appeared, about three years ago, a book intitled 'The Confessions of J. J. Rousseau, citizen of Geneva, containing anecdotes of his life, written by himself.' In this work he does not spare himself; he even advances singularities with respect to himself which might be injurious to him, if his celebrity did not elevate him above criticism. But I am acquainted with one circumstance which happened to him in the latter years of his life, that is not to be found in his 'Confessions.' The author has perhaps forgotten it, or had not had time to insert it among the rest, as his book is posthumous. This anecdote does not concern me particularly, but I mention it because it prevented me from communicating my comedy to M. Rousseau.

This learned stranger had friends and a number of admirers at Paris. M*** was both a friend and admirer; he loved, esteemed, and pitied him at the same time, being acquainted with his distress as well as his talents.

M*** proposed to the Genevese author very elegant and commodious furnished apartments, near the garden of the Tuileries; and that it might not shock the delicacy of his friend, he offered them to him for the same price as that he paid for the lodgings he occupied. M. Rousseau perceived the intention of the generous man, rejected the offer abruptly, and exclaimed that he would not be deceived.

M***, who was also a philosopher, and being a Frenchman, could unite politeness with his philosophy, did not allow himself to be chagrined at the refusal; he knew the man, and pardoned him his foibles; he continued to call on him, and good-naturedly climbed up to the fourth story to enjoy his conversation.

He had heard of the 'Confessions of J. J. Rousseau,' and entertained a desire to see the whole or part of them; and having himself in his portfolio, characters of the age composed by him, in the manner of Theo-

phrastus and La Bruyere, he proposed to his friend the reading of their respective works.

M. Rousseau accepted the proposition, but on condition that M*** would be satisfied with a frugal supper at the Hotel Plâtrière. M*** observed that they would be more comfortable at his house. "That may be," said the other, "but you must sup with me, or the reading shall not take place. The only concession I can make," he added, "is to allow you to bring a bottle of your wine, for they give me very bad wine where I am lodged."

The complaisant Frenchman agreed to everything; but unfortunately he was too kind, too polite, having sent a basket with six bottles of excellent wine, and six bottles of malaga. This surprise put the Genevese in ill humour. When the Frenchman arrived, he was not backward in perceiving it, and asked some explanation. "We two," said Rousseau, "cannot drink twelve bottles of wine; I have taken one from your basket, which is enough for a moderate supper; send back the remainder instantly, or you shall not sup with me."

The threat was not very alarming, but it was the reading which interested the guest; his servant was at hand, and he gave him the basket to carry back. Rousseau was satisfied, and began first to read.

The sending back the wine was attended with much loss of time; they were interrupted by madame Rousseau, who wanted the table for the supper; they could have read without a table, but the supper was served up instantly. It consisted of a pullet and a sallad, and nothing more.

When the supper was over, it was M***'s turn to read; he read a chapter, which was applauded as very good; he read a second, and M. Rousseau rose, and walked backwards and forwards with a discontented and displeased air. When interrogated respecting the cause of his anger, he said—"It is unbecoming to insult respectable

people in their own house."—"What," said the other, "do you complain of?"—"You have not a fool to deal with," replied the philosopher, "this is my portrait, which you have been drawing in exaggerated colours, with satirical traits—it is shocking, it is unworthy!" . . . .

"Gently, my good sir," said the Frenchman, "I love and esteem you, and you know me; the person whom I have been pourtraying is one of those harsh, troublesome, and bitter individuals who are so frequently met with in society."—"Yes, yes," replied M. Rousseau, "I am aware that I pass for a character of this kind in the minds of the ignorant; I pity and despise them, but I cannot bear that a man like you, that a friend, real or pretended, should come to laugh at me."

It was in vain for M*** to speak; he could gain nothing; the head of the other was disordered, they quarrelled seriously, and at last a very sharp correspondence took place between them.

I was intimate with the French author. I saw him the day after his rupture with M. Rousseau in a company where we frequently met; he communicated to us what had taken place. Some laughed, and others made observations on it. It furnished me also with food for reflection. Rousseau was blunt; he had even owned it in his dispute with his friend; he had only to appropriate to himself the beneficence also, and then he would have said that I wished to pourtray him in my play. I carefully, therefore, avoided exposing myself to the effects of ill humour, and I never saw him again.

This man had received the most excellent qualities from nature, and he gave striking proofs of it; but he was of the P. R. religion, and he composed works which were not orthodox. For this he was obliged to leave France, which he had adopted as his country; and this disaster chagrined him. He believed he was

treated with injustice by mankind, whom he consequently was led to despise, and this feeling could not be of any advantage to him.

What a number of generous offers and protections he refused! His garret became dearer in his eyes than a palace. Some discovered grandeur of soul in his conduct, while others saw only pride in it. At all events he was much to be pitied; his weaknesses did injury to nobody, and his talents rendered him respectable. He died as he lived, like a philosopher; and the republic of letters is indebted to the generous individual who honoured his ashes.

CHAPTER XVII.

Marriage of monsieur, the king of France's brother—The park of Versailles—madame Louisa takes the veil with the carmelites of Saint Denis—The small theatres of Paris—The boulevards; the fairs; the promenades of that capital and the environs.

In the month of May 1771, the marriage of the count de Provence, the grandson of Louis XV, and brother of the dauphin, with Maria Louisa of Savoy, eldest daughter of the king of Sardinia, was celebrated at Versailles.

This important event redoubled the joy of the French, for the prince in question was beloved by his country, and rendered himself still more interesting by his virtues and talents; and the princess, from her abilities and her information, became the delight of her husband.

The count de Provence is now called monsieur, and his spouse madame. These titles are only given in France to the eldest brother, and sister-in-law of the king. This ought to be known by the three quarters

of the world; I inform those strangers who may be ignorant of it.

The rejoicings for this marriage were equal, in point of magnificence, to those of the preceding year. I had passed my time in the apartments during the marriage of the dauphin; on this occasion I enjoyed the gardens.

The park of Versailles is delightful in itself; I have never yet mentioned it, and it is now time to speak of it. Its extent is immense, its compartments varied; in every quarter we observe a profusion of precious marble, of original statues of celebrated modern artists, and very exact copies from the most valuable antiques. We everywhere meet with decorated alleys, which conceal rustic and umbrageous retreats, and basins richly adorned, borders agreeably laid out, superb fountains, and jets-d'eau of surprising elevation.

The orangery is a master-piece of art, and the quantity and size of the trees surprising, considering the unsuitableness of the climate to the nature of orange-trees. But the groves constitute the principal charm of these enchanting gardens.

These sorts of halls, or closets, are not open to everybody; they may be seen on certain solemn occasions, or on the arrival of illustrious foreigners, by going in the train of the court. At all other times they are shut; but there are individuals to whom, by way of favour, a key is entrusted. I was so fortunate as to have one, and I could examine them at my ease, and enable my friends also to enjoy them.

The groves are twelve in number; the ball-room, the chandeliers, the domes, the encelade, the obelisks, the baths of Apollo, the three fountains, the triumphal arch, and the labyrinth. This last was suppressed in the beginning of the present reign, for an English garden, which was substituted in its place.

The groves contain master-pieces of sculpture and architecture. The two most remarkable groves are the baths of Apollo and the colonnade. In the first

we observe a group of seven figures of white marble, of singular grandeur and perfection; and we admire in the other a peristile of a circular form, composed of thirty-two columns of different chosen marbles.

All these groves were opened on the celebration of the nuptials already mentioned; there was dancing in the ball-room, the colonnade, and the chesnut-hall. Others were fitted up for the amusement of the public, and the petty theatrical entertainments of Paris were exhibited there.

Those strangers who are unacquainted with that capital will be curious, perhaps, to learn the nature of the petty entertainments now spoken of by me, and I shall satisfy them. But in the mean time I must mention a piece of magnanimity interesting to religion and humanity.

In the year 1771, and in the midst of the court rejoicings, madame Louisa, daughter of Louis XV, quitted the world, and shut herself up for life in a cloister. She selected the most humble and austere of all the orders.

This pious princess took the veil of Saint Theresa, among the carmelites of Saint Denis. She had no reason to fear that the royal abode would prevent her from exercising her piety and her virtues; but the corruption of our age required an august example to bring timid souls back to the way of perfection, and God made choice of a princess of the blood of the Bourbons for their encouragement.

The petty spectacles of Paris are those which follow the different fairs of that city, and play during the rest of the year on the boulevards.

I shall not enter into any detail respecting their origin, but merely mention the state in which I found them on my arrival in Paris, and their progress after my arrival.

The theatre of Nicolet was then the first in rank at the fairs and on the boulevard of the Temple; it was a theatre of rope-dancers, who performed under the

king's letters-patent, and after these exercises, represented small pieces written out in dialogue.

The boulevards were my favourite walk; I considered them as an agreeable and salutary resource in a very large and populous city, the streets of which are not wide, and where the height of the buildings prevents the circulation of air.

They are bastions of great extent which surround the town; four rows of large trees form a vast road in the middle for carriages, and two lateral alleys for foot passengers. The country is seen from them, and we enjoy a number of varied and agreeable views of the environs of Paris, while we may be amused at the same time with the different diversions which are there assembled.

An immense crowd of people, an astonishing multitude of carriages, of hawkers who dart through among the wheels and the horses with all sorts of goods; chairs on foot-paths for those who love to see, and those who seat themselves to be seen; coffee-houses excellently decorated with an orchestra, and Italian and French voices; pastry-cooks, fruiterers, restaurateurs, puppet-shows, tumblers, fellows bawling out giants, dwarfs, wild beasts, sea-monsters, wax-works, automatons, ventriloquists, the cabinet of Comus, a learned physician, and an equally agreeable and surprising mathematician.

I saw one day at the door of Nicolet's theatre, that the third piece was 'Coriolanus,' a tragedy in one act; this bill seemed to me so extraordinary, that I instantly entered, lest I should not find room, and I found myself almost alone in the gallery.

Some minutes afterwards, a young man of a handsome figure, but very indifferently dressed, came up to me; the people began to assemble; I imagined him a spectator as well as myself; I endeavoured to make room for him. He was an actor of Nicolet's company, who was to play the part of Coriolanus, and, not having the command of a decent sword, he

came to request me to have the goodness to lend him mine.

Not being acquainted with him, I hesitated a few moments, and put questions to him to ascertain whether he really belonged to the theatre; I asked him if the 'Coriolanus' in the bill was a tragedy or a parody; he assured me it was a very serious and very well executed work; he told me enough to quiet me, and I gave him my sword, delighted with seeing it dazzle in the hands of the valorous captain.

I waited a long time with great impatience for the piece which drew me to the theatre; the rope-dancers disgusted me; the two first pieces in dialogue threw me asleep; at length the turn of 'Coriolanus' came.

The actors were ill-dressed, and the verses badly delivered; but I could perceive that the work was not without merit, and that the author had treated his subject with great ingenuity. There is but one interesting instant in the history of Coriolanus—that in which this Roman captain advances to revenge himself for the ingratitude of his country, and allows himself to be disarmed by the tears of Volumnia, his mother, and Veturia, his wife.

We have seven or eight tragedies in five acts on the same subject, and they have nearly all of them been unsuccessful. M. de la Harpe alone has contrived to render the four first acts of his 'Coriolanus' interesting and agreeable; but I persist in maintaining that the author of the piece in one act gave his subject all the extent which history supplies, and avoided the danger of tediousness.

I shall say nothing of his style, for I guessed rather than heard. The actors of Nicolet were not well adapted for this sort of representation, and this theatre in general was then very ill furnished. It is much better at present; the small theatres since established have excited an emulation, and placed the manager under the necessity of supplying himself with better actors.

The Ambigua Comique was the first which made its appearance in the boulevards after Nicolet's. This spectacle began with puppet-shows, called wooden comedians; it had a tolerable orchestra which executed known airs, and the puppets caricatured the actors of the large theatres by whom these airs had been sung.

This novelty was very much relished and run after, but it could not be carried to any great extent, and the director changed the wooden comedians for living ones, very well instructed in singing and dancing. There were authors who did not disdain to compose some pretty pieces, suitable to the actors and the theatre. The Ambigua Comique became the fashionable spectacle; I know not whether the manager is rich, but he had time and means for becoming so.

Some years afterwards, a third spectacle was opened on the boulevard Saint Martin, under the title of 'Amusing Varieties.' This last was better provided with actors and comic pieces than the others, and was afterwards transported to the Palais Royal, where it still continued to enjoy the same credit and good fortune.

The house of the young comedians, established in the same place, is not less frequented, They are children, who accompany so dextrously with their gestures the voices of men and women who sing behind the scenes, that it was at first believed, and has been often betted, that the singing actually proceeded from the children themselves.

The two last spectacles, and some other curiosities to be seen in the Palais Royal, enjoy the privilege of not being obliged to attend the different fairs of the city; for these fairs are kept up more for the interest of the proprietors of the ground than for that of commerce.

Torré, an Italian maker of fire-works, was the first who opened a summer Vauxhall on the boulevards, which did not subsist for any length of time. An

immense building was erected near the Elysian Fields, under the title of Coliseum, in which the proprietors were ruined. To exact money for admission into a confined and disagreeable promenade, in a country where there are so many spacious and agreeable promenades, is, in my opinion, a very bad speculation.

Independently of the Tuileries and the boulevards, there are promenades in every direction without leaving the city.

The Luxembourg garden is very ample and well frequented: this is the rendezvous of sensible people, monks, philosophers, and economists.

At the Arsenal we enjoy the view of the country and the river; we enjoy the same view and the same air in the garden of the infanta and the queen's court; the Temple gardens, and the Soubise hotel are of great utility to these neighbourhoods.

But the most essential places where instruction and amusement are combined, are the Botanic Garden, and the Royal Cabinet.

In the one, we find all the rarest and most useful plants; in the other, there is an immense collection of all sorts of animals and minerals from different regions.

The count de Buffon, who presides over the garden and the cabinet, has acquired great celebrity by his natural history. Acquainted with all the systems respecting the three kingdoms of nature, he has made himself a thorough master of them, and thrown light on them. He has given publicity to new systems of his own, of a very sagacious and satisfactory nature, and he has rendered this study equally agreeable and interesting from the elevation and perspicuity of his style.

The count de la Billarderie d'Angeviller, appointed to succeed M. de Buffon in this office, gives at present proofs of his merit and knowledge in the charge which he fills as director and general controuler of the royal buildings and academies I had the honour to become acquainted with him at Versailles; he has always con-

tinued his kindness towards me, and I am glad to have this opportunity of testifying my gratitude.

But I have still something to say respecting the promenades of this capital and its environs. The Elysian Fields, for example, are well deserving of mention. This is an immense space shaded by trees, distributed in quincunxes; and the crowds which frequent it, seem to have emptied the town. However, there are people in all directions; we find crowds at the wood of Bologne, the park of Saint Cloud, Belleville, the Pré Saint Gervais; and everywhere the national taste and gaiety are observable.

Paris is beautiful; its environs are delightful, and its inhabitants amiable; however, there are people who dislike it. It is said, that it requires a great outlay to be able to enjoy it: this is an untruth; no one has less money than myself, yet I enjoy it, amuse myself, and am satisfied. There are pleasures for every situation in life: limit your desires; act according to your income, and you will find yourself comfortable here, or uncomfortable everywhere else.

CHAPTER XVIII.

'The Ostentatious Miser,' a comedy in five acts—Anecdotes respecting it—Marriage of the count d'Artois, the king's brother—Arrival at Paris of the chevalier John Mocenigo, the new Venetian ambassador—His kindness to me—His successful negotiation respecting the Droit d'Aubaine, between the court of France and his republic—My attentions towards Italians—New edition of Metastasio—Death of Louis XV—Accession of Louis XVI to the throne—Illness of the French princesses—Their recovery at Choisi—Marriage of madame Clotilda, the king's sister—My services to that princess and madame Elizabeth—Birth of the duke d'Angouleme—New kindnesses of the king to me.

I HAD done nothing since the success of my 'Surly Benefactor.' I said jokingly, that I wished to repose on my laurels; but it was the fear of not succeeding a second time as well as the first, which prevented me from satisfying the desires of my friends and myself. At length I yielded to the solicitations of others and my own self-love.

I cast my eyes on the 'Ostentatious Miser,' a character so frequently to be met with in nature, that I had only to fear the too great number of originals. I took my protagonist from among the class of upstarts, to avoid the danger of coming in contact with the higher classes.

This piece, which is very little known, and which many people would wish to know, underwent singular adventures.

The first person to whom I showed it when it was fit to appear, was M. Preville. I had destined the character of the marquis for him, and I was anxious to have his opinion of that character, and of the whole of my comedy.

He seemed to me satisfied with both. I observed

to him how difficult it would be to represent naturally the character he was going to undertake. "I am acquainted," said he, "with this precious sort of nature."

After the encouragement of this valuable actor, I read my piece to the whole of the comedians assembled: it had votes for and against, and was received subject to correction. I was not accustomed to this sort of reception:—"However," said I to myself, "no pride, no obstinacy." I retracted one thing here, added another there, corrected, polished, and embellished my work. A second reading took place, and the piece was received and placed in the repertory for the journey to Fontainebleau.

It was to be acted among the first at the court theatre. M. Preville fell sick on arriving there: he remained a month confined to bed, but recovered towards the end of the visit, and 'The Ostentatious Miser' was destined for the eve of the king's departure.

All the ministers, strangers, and people in office, had taken their departure; the actors were fatigued; they had no great desire to study, and still less to rehearse. I saw the critical situation of my piece, and very modestly demanded if it were possible to suspend the representation of it.—There were no others on the repertory, and I was made to believe that it could not be dispensed with.

I went to the first representation, and took my ordinary position in the bottom of the theatre, behind the curtain. So few people were present, that the favourable or unfavourable impression made by the piece could not be perceived, and it finished without any sign of either approbation or reprobation. I returned home without seeing any one. Everybody packed up for their departure, and I did the same; and we all took our departure accordingly.

On the road I had time for reflection: the freezing coldness with which my work was listened to, might

proceed from the emptiness of the house, and the circumstances of the moment; but I saw that some of the actors had mistaken their characters.

I have nothing to say with respect to M. Preville, as his part was extremely difficult, and he had not sufficient time to familiarize himself with those broken phrases which require a deal of ingenuity to make the audience comprehend what the actor does not pronounce. My great fault was in not remonstrating and using interest to prevent my piece from being acted at Fontainebleau.—Thus, in recapitulating my mistakes, I wrote to the actors on my arrival in Paris, and I instantly withdrew my piece.

My friends were impatiently desirous of seeing my 'Ostentatious Miser' on the stage of Paris; and they were all displeased to learn that I had withdrawn it. They grumbled, they solicited, they teased me, to allow it to be again represented, and I was informed, by way of encouragement, of the number of pieces which, though unfortunate at their first representation, afterwards recovered. They were in the right perhaps, and I should have followed their advice and satisfied their wishes, if the actors had given me any reason to think they were desirous of again appearing in it; but they were apparently as much disgusted with it as myself: it was born under an unfortunate planet, the influence of which I dreaded. I condemned it, therefore, to oblivion, and my rigour went so far, that I refused it to those persons who demanded a reading of it.

I could not, however, resist the demand of one of the principal nobles of the kingdom, whose prayers are commands. I did homage to him with my comedy, the reading of which was undertaken by a lady. She acquitted herself with the facility and grace which are natural to her; but on the first entrance of the marquis, she was taken by surprise at the singularity of the character, of which she had not received any previous idea.

M. *** laid hold of the original, and read this and all the other scenes where this character is introduced, with such ease and precision, that he might have been taken for the author of the work. I own that I could not contain my joy and my admiration.

Every person was satisfied with the reading; I was in a house distinguished for kindness aud attention, and I could expect nothing but compliments.

The marriage of the count d'Artois, the brother of Louis XVI with Maria Theresa of Savoy, the daughter of the king of Sardinia and the sister of madame, was celebrated in the month of November 1773, at Versailles.

The rejoicings on this occasion displayed the usual pomp and magnificence.

The season was adverse to the rural entertainments of the park, but the apartments were so much the more brilliant, from the number of balls and gaming parties, and the multitude of strangers who flocked from all quarters, to be present at the nuptials, and pass the winter at Paris.*

About this time the chevalier John Mocenigo, the Venetian ambassador, came to succeed the chevalier Sebastian Mocenigo, his younger brother, whose embassy was expired.

This new minister of the republic was one of my old protectors; he had given me the most undoubted proofs of his benevolence; he had lodged me and my family a long time in his house; and with the Balbi, the Querini, the Berengan, and the Barbarigo families, he protected my first Florence edition, and facilitated its entrance into the city of Venice, notwithstanding the barbarous war carried on against me by the booksellers.

I received a fresh mark of his kindness for me on the occasion of his marriage with the niece of the Doge Loredan, when he wrote me the following note:—

"The most serene Doge has permitted me to invite a few of my friends to the nuptials; you are of the

number; I request your presence; you will find your place."

I did not fail. There was a table for a hundred guests in the banqueting hall, and another for twenty-four, the honours of which were done by the Doge's nephew; I was of the last party; but at the second course we all quitted our place and repaired to the great hall, making the tour of that immense apartment, and seating ourselves behind one another. I in particular enjoyed the kindness which was lavished on an author who had been so fortunate as to give pleasure.

The chevalier John Mocenigo, during the course of his embassy, rendered a most essential piece of service to his nation. He entered into a negotiation with the court of France for the reciprocal abolition of the Droit d'Aubaine; and he succeeded in it.

I learned this event with great satisfaction. I was not myself interested in it, for I have nothing to leave to my heirs after my death, but I rejoiced for the sake of the Venetians who have business in France.

I have always felt a kindness for my countrymen, and welcomed them to my house. I have more than once been deceived, it is true, but unprincipled individuals have never disgusted me with the pleasure of rendering myself useful; and I flatter myself that no Italian ever went away from me dissatisfied.

Enchanted with being in France, I love to converse from time to time with the people of my own country, or Frenchmen who can speak Italian.

The place where I most frequently meet with them is madame du Boccage's. Every foreigner, distinguished for his good qualities or his talents, is eager, on arriving at Paris, to pay his court to that lady. I made a very agreeable and very interesting discovery for me at her house.

One day that I was to dine there, I was introduced by the countess Bianchetti, the niece of madame du Boccage, to a lady whom I ought to have known, but whom I did not recollect. I was astonished to hear

myself saluted in very good Venetian by a person who till that moment had spoken excellent French.

She was the wife of M. de la Borde, the administrator-general of the royal domains, and sister of M. le Blond, who succeeded his father as French consul at Venice. I knew this lady in her early youth. She was the youngest of three sisters, who were called the three beauties of Venice.

After the Tuscan and Venetian dialects, I am most amused with the Genoese. God (say the Italians), having assigned a language to every nation, forgot the Genoese, who composed one according to their own fancy, which still resembles the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel. It is, however, the language of my wife, and I understand and speak it pretty well.

I had formerly an opportunity of frequently conversing with a Genoese friend of mine, whose circumstances have removed him to a distance from Paris. I have no longer the pleasure of his society, but I have still that of dining very frequently with his wife.

A small, but charming society assembles at her house. M. Valmont de Bomare, the naturalist, who does not refuse to communicate instruction and amusement to the guests when he is interrogated respecting the extent of his knowledge; M. Coqueley de Chaussepierre, an advocate of the parliament, who always mixes gaiety and amusement with the most serious subjects, as well as in his gallant attentions; and several other individuals equally amiable and respectable.

At table, the news of the day, the theatres, discoveries, projects, and events, are talked of, and everyone contributes something to the general amusement; and if any discussion arises, the mistress of the house, who is distinguished for her talents and knowledge, is at the expense of the conciliation.

Should my Memoirs have the good fortune to cross the sea, my friend *** will see that I have not forgotten him. Besides, I do justice to truth, and no-

thing is more flattering to me than to have an opportunity of speaking of the friends whom I love sincerely and constantly, whether they are Italians or Frenchmen.

The French nation is now as dear to me as my own, and it is an additional delight to me to fall in with Frenchmen who speak Italian. I shall mention several of those who, to my knowledge, speak and write it better than others.

Madame Pothouin, lately become the widow of M. Pothouin, a celebrated advocate of the parliament of Paris, as respectable for wit and talents as her husband was for his science and probity, without ever having been in Italy, and having begun the study of the Italian language late in life, and only followed it for two years, can carry on a long conversation with Italians in the most correct and current language.

The president Tachar adds to his very extensive knowledge and taste in the French language that of a thorough acquaintance with the Italian language and literature.

While he filled the very important and laborious office of intendant of the Windward Islands, in the West Indies, he found time to write to me, and our correspondence was always carried on in Italian.

He then groped his way in the Tuscan dialect, and was rarely mistaken. After his return from America, he travelled in Italy; and he is no longer a Frenchman who imitates the Italians, but, from his conversation and letters, seems to belong equally to the two nations.

The baroness de Bordic has great taste and facility in the Italian language. I had the honour to see and become acquainted with her at Paris, where she delighted all who saw her during her visit of a few months. Esteemed for her good qualities, admired for her talents, and cherished for the charms of her poetry, she was adored in the capital.

Madame de Bordic resides at Nîmes; I regret the

privation of her society, but her correspondence indemnifies me, and the letters I receive from her, from time to time, afford a strong proof of the attention with which she has studied our language and authors.

M. Cousin, king's advocate in the bailliage of Caux, is also a great amateur of Italian. I have never had the honour to see him, but he has done me that of writing to me from Dieppe, where he resides, and always in Italian, sometimes even in the Venetian dialect.

Our Italian literature is very much relished in France, and our books well received and paid for; the libraries of Paris are stocked with them. The late M. Floncel possessed a library of sixteen thousand volumes, all in the Italian language. M. Molini, an Italian bookseller in the capital, carries on a considerable trade in Italian books.

The number of copies of my comedies sold in this country is prodigious; and the eagerness displayed in subscribing to the new and superb edition of the works of Metastasio is still more so.

To the joy diffused by the marriage of the three princes throughout the kingdom, the most gloomy sadness succeeded. Louis XV fell ill; the small-pox soon broke out; the kind was the most malignant and complicated, and this king, who possessed the most vigorous and excellent constitution, fell a victim to the violence of this scourge to mankind.

What an affliction for France, which had conferred on him the title of "Well-beloved!"—What a desolation for his family, by whom he was adored! What a loss for his old servants, who were more attached to him through sentiment than duty!

He was the most forgiving king, the most tender father, and the kindest master; the qualities of his heart were excellent, and his mental advantages were great.

But providence has given him a successor possessed of numerous virtues. Goodness, justice, clemency,

benevolence, are duties imposed on all those whom God has destined for the government of mankind; it is his personal qualities for which he is chiefly distinguished; his merits, his correct conduct, his zeal for the public good, and for the peace and tranquillity of Europe; his religion and moderation, the probity which he exacts, the example which he gives—these are rare virtues, and much more essentially useful to the state than the spirit of conquest; they are inexhaustible sources of praise and immortal glory.

Alas! what vicissitudes in human life! Here I am obliged to commemorate a fresh subject of dread and grief. The three daughters of Louis XV, who never quitted their father's bed during his illness, began to display the same symptoms, and incur the same danger.

These princesses were too interesting not to excite a general alarm respecting their situation. God preserved them to us; God snatched from the arms of death this heroic example of filial love.

The princesses passed the period of their convalescence at Choisi. I participated in the general grief at this melancholy conjuncture, and I went in their train to breathe the salutary air of that delightful place.

One day when I was present at the dinner of the princesses and other ladies of their party, the only man at table was the prince de Condé. Madame Adelaide did me the honour of naming me to that prince of the blood, who bestowed a look of great kindness on me. I accosted him respectfully, and he spoke to me of the 'Surly Benefactor.' I knew that he had acted in it at Chantilly, and represented the character of Geronte in great perfection; and I took this opportunity of returning him my compliments and acknowledgments.

On returning to Paris, I heard of a projected marriage between madame Clotilda, the sister of the king of France, and the prince of Piedmont, the presumptive heir of the crown of Sardinia.

This piece of news was very interesting to me, and I went to Versailles for the sake of being better informed respecting it. The account was verified, but a mysterious silence was observed, and it was not till seven months before the marriage that I received orders to attend on the princess, for the sake of giving her some instruction in the Italian language.

I obeyed; but what could she learn in the space of seven months? I took care not to proceed in the common way with her. She was well acquainted with the French grammar, and I only taught her the auxiliary verbs of the Italian. I made her read a great deal; the remarks and short digressions which I intermixed with this reading were of more use to her, in my opinion, than a long catalogue of rules and scholastic difficulties.

My readings had still a more important and interesting tendency; I made her acquainted with the classical Italian authors by name, related anecdotes respecting them, and mentioned the titles of their works; and I endeavoured to instruct her in the Italian manners and customs.

This kind and complaisant princess had a wonderful facility in learning, and a very excellent memory. I went every day, and she made an astonishing progress; but our conferences were frequently interrupted by jewellers, dealers in trinkets, painters, and shopkeepers. Sometimes I entered the room to witness the choice of stuffs, the price paid for jewels, and the resemblance of the portraits.

I endeavoured to derive some advantage from these very inconveniences; I made her repeat in Italian the names of what she had seen, what she had priced, and what she purchased or refused.

We had other circumstances to call off our attention—a journey to Rheims, for the consecration of the king, and the birth of the duke d'Angoulema. This prince, son to the count d'Artois, was the first fruit of the three marriages of the French princes,

and, as his birth could not fail to be interesting to the state, the rejoicings were proportionate to the public joy.

My august scholar, notwithstanding all these interruptions, contrived to turn her time to considerable profit. She pronounced Italian tolerably well, and read it still better. She could read and understand the epithalamiums destined for her by the Piedmontese poets.

The marriage was celebrated by deputy towards the end of August 1775, in the chapel of Versailles. The public rejoicings were superb and magnificent. The princess departed, universally adored and regretted. All who had ever served, or approached her presence, received marks of her goodness. It is not extraordinary that in so great a crowd some one should be forgotten; but it was unfortunate that this accident should happen to me.

With respect to my services and expenses, I demanded nothing, and I received nothing, but still I was persuaded that I should not be a loser. I kept myself quiet, therefore, and said nothing.

Persons who interested themselves in my affairs grew impatient at my silence, and took steps to know the course I ought to adopt. They had more penetration than myself, and their mediation was of great utility to me.

It was believed at court that my pension of 3600 livres obliged me to serve the whole royal family. They were not aware that it was given me by way of recompense for having taught Italian to the princesses. Those who were entrusted with the outlays for the princess of Piedmont were convinced that I deserved to be recompenced; but the affairs relating to that princess were settled; the only recourse was to wait in patience; I was to be employed for madame Elizabeth and the sister of the king, and this was the occasion for which I ought to reserve my demands.

I waited long, and still kept my apartments at Versailles. The day at length came when I received orders to wait on the princess Elizabeth.

This young, lively, gay, and amiable princess was of an age much more inclined to amusement than application. I had been present at the Latin lessons which were given to her, and I perceived that she possessed a great faculty in learning anything, but that she disliked to dwell on minute and trifling difficulties.

I followed, with very little variation, the mode adopted by me with the princess of Piedmont; I did not torment her with declinations and conjugations calculated to disgust her; she wished to make an amusement of her occupation, and I endeavoured to make my lessons agreeable conversations.

When my comedies were read, in the scenes of two characters, the princess and her maid of honour read and translated each their part; and when there were three characters a lady of the company took the third. I translated the others when there happened to be more.

This exercise was useful and amusing; but can we flatter ourselves that young people will long be amused with the same thing? We passed from prose to verse. Metastasio occupied my august scholar for some time. I endeavoured to satisfy her, and she was deserving of it; for it was the most gentle and agreeable service in the world.

I was growing old, however; the air of Versailles did not agree with me; the winds which prevail there, and which blow almost without intermission, attacked my nerves, excited my old hypochondria, and subjected me to palpitations. I was forced to quit the court, and return to Paris, where the air we breathe is less keen, and is more suitable to my temperament.

My nephew, though employed in the war-office, could succeed me; he had done so with the princesses,

and I was certain of the goodness of madame Elizabeth. This was the time to settle my affairs, and I did not forget myself on the occasion.

I presented a bill to the king, which was patronized by the princesses. The queen had even the goodness to interest herself for me, and the king granted me an extraordinary gratification of 6000 livres, and an annuity of 1200 livres during the life of myself and nephew.

CHAPTER XIX.

Departure of the chevalier John Mocenigo, the Venetian ambassador—He is succeeded by the chevalier Zeno—Prohibition of games of chance at Paris—'The Foxes,' a comic opera, in three acts—Arrival of the actors of the Italian comic opera at Paris, to perform in the opera—Birth of the duke of Berry—Birth of Maria-Theresa-Charlotte of France—'Orlando,' an opera, set to music by M. Piccini—This chapter is interrupted by an indisposition to which I am subject—Singularity of this infirmity—Wise conduct of my physician, and relief which I derive from it—Italian suppressed at the Italian theatre—A few words respecting 'The Jealous Wife' and its author—Arrival in France of the chevalier Dolfino, the Venetian ambassador.

WHAT I have been relating in the preceding chapter did not take place during the course of the same year; the continuity of the subject sometimes inducing me to interrupt the chronological order; but I soon return to it, and I am now at the year 1776.

In this year, the countess d'Artois was delivered of a princess, to whom the king instantly gave the title of mademoiselle.

At this period the chevalier John Mocenigo, the Venetian ambassador, terminated the fourth year of his embassy, and was succeeded by the chevalier Zeno.

This Venetian patrician came from Spain where gaming was permitted; and he found it still more generally prevalent in this capital, in the houses of the principal nobility and the foreign ministers. Gaming was the ruling passion of M. Zeno; his house was open to numbers who were treated in high style, and played as high.

This, however, was the very time when the French government began to open their eyes with respect to this dangerous toleration, which was the destruction of youth, and brought whole families to ruin. Games of chance were prohibited. A few foreign ministers claimed a right to enjoy the privileges of the diplomatic body, and their resistance produced a bad effect.

About the same time appeared a book, entitled 'The Passion of Gaming,' by M. du Saulx. This is a complete treatise on the subject, which is discussed both in a moral and political point of view. It is a classical book which was wanting to complete our collection of books of utility to society, and I have no doubt that it contributed to the suppression of the games of hazard.

M. du Saulx attacks also, though slightly, the games of commerce or society, as they are called. He does not mean to proscribe them, but he advises moderation.

This sort of gaming seems to me necessary: it is impossible to pass an evening without doing something; and after the news of the day, and criticising our neighbours, or even our friends, we are obliged from necessity to play.

It is a respectable amusement, an agreeable occupation; but every one does not derive the same amusement from it, a circumstance which depends on the difference of temperament. We may observe persons distinguished for their gentleness, their polished and

agreeable manners, who change their tone and character, and even their physiognomy at a gaming-table.

A generous man sometimes becomes outrageous at a trifling loss; it is not for the loss of the money, he says, but from self-love. That may be, but I play also, and I will sincerely own that I prefer gaining six francs to losing them. I keep an exact account of my gains and my losses, and I am very glad when at the end of the month I find I have gained a few crowns.

It is not because my self-love is then flattered, but because a guinea more or less in my little purse makes a small difference, which causes me a slight pleasure, or a slight chagrin. I am speaking of myself; but no one can take amiss as applied to himself, what I say or what I think.

The most difficult task for a mistress of a house is so to arrange the parties, that the self-love of some may not come in collision with the self-love of others.

But independently of the characters which we ought in reason to excuse, we have still more reason to apprehend the effects of antipathies which break out at play more than elsewhere. That a person should prefer losing his money with a pretty woman, to losing it with me is quite natural; but that the same person should display more bitterness against me than any other person is what, I own, would set me in a passion, if anything could do so. Yet this is what happens every day; the prudent man affects not to perceive it.

Mistresses of houses ought to become acquainted with the sympathies and antipathies of their societies; they ought to know their players and match them properly.

I ask the ladies' pardon, who ought to know much more of those things than myself; but I have another piece of information to give them. They ought not to commence with making their own party, and leave the others to sort themselves as they can. This has happened more than once under my own eyes, and I have

witnessed the complaints of those who supposed themselves ill placed.

Lotto is a very convenient game for avoiding these inconveniences; a number of people are assembled at the same table; the lady who does the honours is there, and everybody is contented; but then again, it is, in my opinion, the most insipid and wearisome game that ever was invented. In all games, chance has the ascendancy; but when I hold cards in my hands, I do something at least, whereas at Lotto I do nothing at all. If I gain at other games, I may flatter myself that my combinations have contributed to it; if I lose, I may even flatter myself with the idea that I escaped some mistakes which another would have fallen into; my self-love is in some degree satisfied; but in this miserable game I am always a sufferer.

In the Dauphin Lotto it is still worse, for we must determine the numbers, and I feel the mortification of having made an improper choice. I hear threes, fours, and fives, demanded around me: I have only extracts (extraits) and a few ambes, and I become a bad player, whether I will or not. I am angry at those who gain, because the gain of others necessarily increases my loss, and my self-love is hurt, my purse suffers also, and I become at last tired. I consider the picture which I have the honour to receive in that case as an unlucky present.

I confide these things to my reader. I should take care how I mention them in those companies, where I consider it a piece of great good fortune to be admitted; and if the amiable and respectable persons, whom I have the honour to frequent, should choose to bestow a glance on these Memoirs, they will, I hope, pardon me for my sincerity.

In the year 1777, a new comic opera was demanded from me for Venice. I had resolved not to compose any more, but imagining that the same work might be of utility to me at Paris, I consented to satisfy my friends, and composed a piece calculated to please in

an equal degree the two nations. Its title was 'I Volponi' ('The Foxes.') They were courtiers jealous of a stranger, to whom they shewed a vast deal of politeness, by way of amusing him, while they plotted his ruin.—This piece contained interest, intrigue, and gaiety, and inculcated an important moral lesson.

It was then in agitation to bring to Paris the actors of the Italian comic opera, whom we call I Buffi, and who are here Buffoons (Bouffons.) This expression would be considered as insulting in Italy, but it is not so in France. It is merely a bad translation.

The music of the good daughter of M. Piccini of the colony of M. Sacchini, and the progress which the taste for Italian singing made every day at Paris, determined the directors of the opera to introduce this foreign entertainment, which was represented on the great theatre of this city.

I was infinitely flattered with this project, and I had the temerity to believe myself necessary to its execution. Nobody knew more of the Italian comic opera than myself. I was aware, that for several years nothing had been given in Italy but farces, of which the music was excellent, and the poetry wretched.

I saw what was wanting to render this entertainment agreeable at Paris. New words were wanting, new dramas in the French taste.

I had performed this task more than once for London, and I was secure of my purpose. Nobody can be more useful than myself on a similar occasion.

I knew from experience how difficult and laborious this work was; but I should have applied to it with infinite pleasure for the sake of the thing itself, and the honour of my nation.

Besides there was every reason to suppose that, if the opera of Paris sent for foreign actors, they would not be contented with their old music, but would employ M. Piccini, who was here, or M. Sacchini, who was at London, in the composition of new.

I kept my comic opera therefore in readiness, and I was almost certain that I should be employed in the composition of others; for I did not think it suitable to the dignity of the principal theatre of this nation, to entertain the public for a length of time with the music which had been already sung in the concerts and parties of Paris.

I was in expectation, therefore, of being spoken to, consulted, and engaged. Alas! nobody ever said a word to me on the subject.

The Italian actors arrived at Paris. I knew some of them, but I did not go to see them, I was not present at their debût. Some of them were good, and some indifferent; their music was excellent; but the entertainment did not succeed, as I had foreseen, on account of the dramas, which were of a nature to displease the French, and to dishonour Italy.

My self-love might have been flattered at seeing my prediction verified, but I was in reality very much distressed at it. I was too great a lover of the comic opera, and I should have been enchanted to have heard Italian music to Italian words; but then such words were requisite as could be read with pleasure, and translated into French without a blush.

Translations of these wretched operas were printed and published. The best translation was the most insupportable; for the more accurately the translators endeavoured to render their text, the more the dulness of the originals became evident.

I supposed this Italian company would leave the place at the close of the year; but their engagement was probably for two, and they remained all the following year. During this second year, they did me the honour to bring me one of their wretched dramas to patch up; but it was too late, the evil was done, and this species of entertainment was cried down. I might have supported it in its beginning, but I did not believe it was in my power to raise it after the crisis which it had experienced.

I must also own that I was piqued at having been forgotten at the proper moment. I do not recollect having for a long time experienced a similar degree of mortification. Some said, by way of consolation, that the directors of the opera thought this employment beneath me. The directors knew nothing of the matter they had in hand; if they had had the goodness to have consulted me, I should have shewn them that they wanted an author, and not a cobler.

Others told me (perhaps without any foundation for saying so) that it was feared Goldoni would be too dear.

I should have laboured for the honour of the thing, had they known how to go to work with me; I should have been high-priced had they haggled with me; but my labours would have indemnified them: and I think I may venture to say, that this entertainment would have been still in existence at Paris.

In the month of January 1778, there were rejoicings at court and in the city for the birth of the duke of Berry, son of the count d'Artois.

But what was the joy of the French when the pregnancy of the queen was declared the same year! She was delivered in the month of December of a princess, who was instantly named Maria-Theresa-Charlotte of France, with the title of madame, the daughter of the king.

This first fruit of the king's marriage was considered as the precursor of the dauphin, who was impatiently expected, and who, after three years, crowned at last the wishes of the French.

The rejoicings on this occasion, and on the queen's recovery, corresponded with the circumstances of the times. France was then engaged in a war which she did not provoke, but which she was obliged to continue for the honour of the nation.

Amidst the din of arms, the amusements of Paris were as numerous as ever. M. Piccini gave this year his first work to the opera.

The queen, who patronized the fine arts, and artists of celebrity, had sent for M. Piccini to France, and procured an annual salary for him, leaving him at liberty to compose for the theatres of Paris.

This Italian composer, on his arrival, was not yet in a condition to choose his poems. M. Marmontel undertook to supply him with what was necessary.

He converted the opera of 'Orlando' by Quinault into three acts with a few changes. M. Piccini displayed his science and taste. But the French, who take as strong an interest in the dramas as the music, cannot suffer modern authors to touch the masterpieces of their ancient authors.

There was, besides, an open war at Paris between the partisans of M. Gluck and those of M. Piccini, and these two parties were again combated by the lovers of French music. . . .

Alas! I am seized with a violent palpitation this very moment . . . . this is an habitual ailment with me, I cannot go on . . . .

I resume the chapter which I left off yesterday. My palpitation has been more vehement and of longer duration this time than usual. It attacked me at four o'clock in the afternoon, and did not leave me till two o'clock in the morning.

The palpitation is not periodical; it attacks me several times in the year, in all seasons, and at all times, sometimes when fasting, sometimes at dinner, sometimes after dinner, and very rarely during the night. But what is most singular in its symptoms, I feel when it is coming on, a commotion in my bowels, my pulse rises, and beats with alarming violence, my muscles are in convulsion, and my breast is oppressed.

I feel when it is going to stop, a beating in my head, and my pulse gradually returns to its natural state. There are no gradations in the attacks or in the cessation. It is an inconceivable phenomenon which can be explained by a comparison with swooning.

Accustomed to this infirmity, which is more alarming than painful, I learned to bear it without dread, and, by way of drawing my attention from it, I generally continued my dinner, if it attacked me at table, or continued my game, if taken by surprise in company. Nobody perceived the state I was in, and as at my age we must learn to put up with our enemies, I made no attempts to get cured, lest in endeavouring to avoid the gulph of Scylla, I should fall into that of Charybdis.

But I was seized with a palpitation of thirty-six hours' continuance about four years ago, and this appearing in rather a serious light to me, I had recourse to my physician. M. Guilbert de Preval, the regent of the college of physicians of Paris, stopped it instantly, and without giving me anything which could at all derange my system; he merely retarded the attacks in future, and diminished the duration of them.

This physician cured me radically of two ringworms, from which I suffered great inconvenience, and which began to grow dangerous. I suffered no inconvenience from the cure; I have been in good health since, and he completed the cure with his dissolvent water.

M. Preval has made himself enemies in the body to which he belongs. It is said that there is a law among them, that no member of their society shall make use of new remedies without communicating them to his brethren. This M. Preval has not done, through fear perhaps lest his remedy should become useless, like so many others in the hands of everybody. He distributes it in his house. The poor are there relieved, and the rich are not subjected to extortion. Happy the man, it is said, whose physician is his friend. M. Preval is the friend of all his patients, as he is the friend of humanity.

In the year 1780, a terrible catastrophe happened to the Italian actors. They had received the comic opera

into partnership with them, and the new body drove out the old.

But the truth must be told. The Italians had become somewhat negligent; the vocal entertainment did everything, and the theatrical nothing. It was reduced to play on Tuesdays and Fridays, which are called the bad days at the theatre; and if it was at any time admitted to appear in good days, it was merely to fill up a void between two pieces in which the public took an interest.

Some of the Italian actors, foreseeing the storm which threatened them, clubbed together to get me to compose something for them. I assented to their proposal with pleasure and even zeal; and I composed six pieces in all, three long and three short. They were satisfied, and paid me for them; but they had not, I suppose, time to study and act them, for none of them appeared on the stage.

The Italian theatre was suppressed, and the incorporated actors dismissed with pensions corresponding to the characters which they respectively acted. Those who had not completed their time were indemnified, and the servants were recompensed. The only person retained was M. Carlin, by way of compensation for his forty years' services, and because the character of harlequin might be of utility in French pieces.

M. Carlin was not merely useful, he was absolutely necessary. The new pieces of the chevalier de Florian merited preservation. This young author possessed the art of exhibiting that grotesque personage in a superior style.

This mask is not allowed to utter what is downrightly stupid. He is an imaginary being, invented by the Italians and adopted by the French, who has the exclusive right of uniting naiveté with finesse, and no one ever surpassed M. de Florian in the delineation of this amphibious character.

But what is more, he has contrived to impart senti-

ment, passion, and morality to his pieces, and to render them interesting. 'The Two Notes,' ('Les Deux Billets,') 'The Well-regulated Family,' ('Le Bon Menage,') 'The Twins of Bergamo,' and 'The Good Father,' are master-pieces of their kind. He composed them for himself: nobody represented them so well as himself in society, and M. Carlin was the only person who could give the public an idea of them.

M. Corali was sent for from Italy as a counterpart to Carlin. This new actor was not without merit; but comparisons are seldom favourable for the last comer. M. Corali however was not sent back again; he rendered himself useful in the comic opera, and was retained at the same salary which he before enjoyed.

M. Camerina, who played the part of Scapin in the suppressed entertainment, was pensioned off as well as his companions; but he was received some days afterwards as an actor, and with the title of perpetual weekly officer (Semainier) of the company.

This active, intelligent, and upright man, who is entrusted with the most difficult commissions, knows so well how to conciliate the interests of society, and those of individuals, that he is the reconciliator and arbiter in all quarrels, and the friend of every body.

The comic opera, when freed from the Italian company, could not alone supply two or three pieces daily in the course of the year.

There was formerly in this theatre a French company which was connected as a body with the Italians. They were dismissed by the latter, but were now again replaced by the comic opera. This company is tolerably well composed, and contains actors who would even be useful to the French theatre. They have represented charming pieces, but I shall merely mention 'The Jealous Wife,' and its author.

This piece, in five acts, and in verse, is, in my opinion, a finished work. The subject, to appearance

threadbare, is there treated in a manner which seems altogether new. The author had the ingenuity to give an appearance of reason to an unfounded jealousy; the wife is interesting from apparently well-founded fears, and the husband is no less so from the delicacy of his secret. All the characters of the piece are true, the episodes well adapted, the scenes capable of a double construction, and the surprises are well contrived; the catastrophe is natural and satisfactory, the style noble, comic, and correct, and the verses are harmonious without affectation. I shall not attempt an extract from a piece which is not printed; I merely declare the reasons which induce me to look upon it as a very well-written comedy.

I leap from one subject to another in my Memoirs; I pass boldly from comedy to a more serious and noble subject.

The chevalier Dolfino, the Venetian ambassador, relieved this year (1780) his predecessor the chevalier Zeno.

This new minister, descended from a very ancient and wealthy family, made his appearance in a style suitable to his rank and honourable to his nation. He experienced afflictions which filled his heart with bitterness, and, robust as he was, he was obliged to give way to his grief.

He had brought his two children with him: a son whom he educated under his own eyes, and a daughter whom he entrusted to the nuns of Panthemont.

Both of them were of great promise, and were the delight of a tender father, who, to cultivate their minds, had procured for them the advantages of a French education.

The daughter sickened and died. The son, the only remaining consolation of his father, died also. The father was distracted; he went to Venice to mingle his tears with those of the afflicted mother, and he returned in great distress. M. Dolfino was no longer the same, and was seldom to be seen. I very rarely

got sight of him, and his grief distressed me keenly. Both father and son were kind and friendly in the extreme to me, and it was impossible for me not warmly to feel the distressing circumstances of the family.

CHAPTER XX.

New fire at the opera—Birth of the dauphin—Rejoicings on the occasion—A new opera-house built on the Boulevards—Marriage of my niece in Italy—Eulogy of a book and its author—A few words respecting the family of one of my friends—The new French theatre—The theatre of the Italians—The balloons—The somnambulists—The man from Lyons, who walked on the water dry-footed—This joke involves the 'Journal de Paris'—This journal is amply justified—The periodical publications of Paris.

THE opera-house, which was burnt to the ground in 1763, experienced the same fate on the 16th of June 1781, at the close of the entertainment.

The flames of the lateral lights of the theatre caught one of the scenes; of the two workmen, whose business it was to be at the two ends, one was not in his place; the other cut the cord at his side; the canvas, which was rolled up, fell perpendicularly; the fire spread rapidly, and gained the wood-work above; and in three quarters of an hour the interior of the opera was burnt down.

I dined that day with the count de Miromesnil, the brother of the keeper of the seals, and discharging the functions of the chancellorship, to which he had the right of survivorship: the cries of the people, and ringing of bells, informed us of this disaster; we observed a shower of fire fall on the roof of the royal library; we trembled for this precious monument,

and for the house in which we were, and the whole quarter.

The count de Miromesnil sent every moment to the Palais Royal; he gave orders himself, and was foremost in taking the precautions which he deemed necessary for the public good, and that of individuals. On this occasion, he shewed himself what he always is in affairs of importance, and for people in whom he is interested. There is not a more active man, a warmer friend, or more zealous protector than he is.

The opera could not so easily be accommodated this time as on the occasion of the former fire. The hall of the Tuileries was still occupied by the company of the French theatre, and the opera singers were obliged to represent in the small private theatre of the king till a new edifice could be erected.

Different places were proposed for this new building; sometimes it was to be reconstructed in the Palais Royal, sometimes at the Carousel; at other times on the site of the market-place, and again in other situations.

Everyday some new project was talked of, which was said to be certain, agreed on, and signed; but which was never in existence.

However, something was necessary; the building was indispensable for the ornament of the town and the amusement of the public, and a fortunate circumstance for France rendered the construction more desirable than ever.—The queen became pregnant; the opera could not fail to figure on the occasion of the public rejoicings. The idea of a magnificent and solid building was put off to another time, and there was erected on the Boulevards, in the meantime, in the space of sixty-six days a very beautiful, convenient, and agreeable theatre, which is still in existence, and which will long exist.

This prodigy was executed by M. le Noir, a very able architect of distinguished intelligence and taste. He gave to this theatre all the solidity which was ne-

cessary, and such a form and extent as the situation would permit.

It was opened at the birth of the dauphin, and the opera represented gratis to the public by way of rejoicing at this happy event.

The public displayed every symptom of joy; the rejoicings corresponded with the grandeur of the occasion; the Hotel de Ville of Paris was decorated in a superior manner for the reception of the king and queen; fire-works on a wonderful construction were exhibited, but the fire did not succeed.

The king's body-guards distinguished themselves chiefly on this occasion.

They gave a ball in the great theatre at Versailles; three persons were chosen from each of the four companies to dance, and one of those gentlemen opened the ball with the queen. The theatre was richly ornamented and completely lighted up; the refreshments were in profusion; and the most exact order prevailed.

I participated in the public joy. I was, either from custom, inclination, or gratitude, a Frenchman like the natives. A family affair, however, soon brought to my recollection that I was born under another sky: and an agreeable event, in which I was particularly interested only redoubled the pleasures which I partook of at Paris.

On leaving Venice I left my niece in a convent there. On attaining the age of twenty, an age when it became necessary to decide whether she chose the cloister or to mix in the world, I interrogated her from time to time in my letters respecting her inclinations. She professed to have no other will than mine. As I had no wish but to satisfy her I thought there was something mysterious concealed under this semblance of modesty, and I requested one of my protectors to have the goodness to sound her with address.

All that he could draw from her was, that so long

as she was in chains, she would never communicate her way of thinking. From this I conjectured that she was not fond of the convent. So much the better: I possessed only entailed property, which may be given as a portion, but the nuns take nothing but ready money.

I wrote a letter to the lady at the head of the convent; and the senator, to whom I entrusted it, went with his lady to the convent and brought her away with them to their house. When there, she did not express herself in the clearest terms; but however as much so as her modesty would permit. She did not wish to be married, but she disliked the convent.

My niece could not long remain in a patrician family, and she was boarded in a very prudent and respectable one. M. Chiaruzzi, the landlord of mademoiselle Goldoni, took care of my affairs at the same time and his wife attended to those of the young woman. In two years his wife died, and the husband demanded my niece in marriage. She seemed satisfied, and I was completely so: my nephew and myself assigned to him all our Italian property, and we set our hands to the necessary writings before M. Lormeau, a notary at Paris. The signature of a man of his probity was a lucky omen to the new couple; and in reality the marriage turned out very happy.

This event was necessary for my tranquillity. I had taken the charge of the two children of my brother. I saw my nephew in a tolerable situation under myself, and I was glad to see my niece settled. My satisfaction would have been at its height if I could have been present at the marriage; but I was too old for a journey of three hundred leagues.

I am well, thank God; but I require precautions for my strength and health. I read every day, and consult attentively the 'Treatise on Old Age,' by M. Robert, doctor-regent of the faculty of Paris.

Our physicians in general take care of us when we are unwell, and endeavour to cure us; but they do not

embarrass themselves with our regimen when we are in good health. From this book I derived instruction and correction. It showed me the degree of vigour which I might still possess, and the necessity of taking care of it. The work is composed in the form of letters; when I read it, I imagine the author speaking to me; in every page, I fall in with, and recognize myself; the advices are salutary without being burthensome: he is not so severe as the school of Salerno, and does not prescribe the regimen of Louis Cornaro, who lived a hundred years as a valetudinary that he might die in good health.

M. Robert is a very wise and intelligent man; he is one of those who have studied nature with the utmost attention, and best know her course. I became acquainted with him at the house of M. Fagnan, one of the principal secretaries of the royal treasury, where we frequently met one another; and madame Fagnan, his widow, who is possessed of talents, graces, and good sense, still continues to receive the intimate friends of her husband with the same cordiality.

The company of the French theatre quitted the Tuileries in 1781, to occupy the new theatre in the Fauxbourg Saint Germain. This building is isolated; its front has a noble appearance, and the ground around it is spacious and very convenient for carriages. Should, notwithstanding all the precautions which have been invented on this occasion, the place still take fire, the neighbourhood has nothing to fear.

The theatre is large, noble, and commodious; the actors have introduced a new improvement into the pit; the public are now seated, but pay the double of what they did. This may have both good and bad consequences for the receipts of the house; young people, accustomed to pay twenty sous, will look twice before they pay forty-eight; and those who used to take places at six francs, will be induced perhaps to put up with this economical seat.

I have another observation to make respecting this

change. The pit used formerly to judge the new pieces: this pit is no longer the same; authors give tickets to insure the success of their works; and those who are jealous of them, give tickets to effect their condemnation. The doubling the price must diminish the number of both the supporters and enemies. Is it an advantage, or a disadvantage?—I refer to the receipts of the theatre; but they are so great and so certain, from the boxes hired out by the year, that they can hardly perceive the alteration.

The Italian actors, in their turn, changed their situation the following year: this was more requisite for them than the others. The position of the old Hotel de Bourgogne was very inconvenient for the public, and still more so for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. I was one, and I have experienced no small degree of risk in endeavouring to return home when the carriages were filing off.

Amidst a number of projects proposed by the architects every day, the actors fixed on that of the hotel and garden of the duc de Choiseul, on which streets, houses, and establishments of every kind, were going to be erected.

The undertaker of these buildings gave the actors a theatre built, ornamented, and furnished in every respect, except the theatrical decorations, and ready for the use of the purchasers, for the agreed price of one hundred thousand crowns. The actors signed the contract, paid the sum, and the theatre belongs to them.

They made some changes the following year for the convenience of the public; these changes afforded a considerable relief. It is one of the finest theatres in Paris, and is agreeably and well frequented.

Thus the three great theatres of Paris were renewed almost at the same time, and this is what the French could wish to see every day. The public are only amused with novelties; one thing effaces another; and in a great country they pass in rapid succession.

An interesting discovery was made at this time. M. de Montgolfier was the first who darted a globe into the air. The globe rose higher than the eye could reach, at the mercy of the winds, and supported itself till the extinction of the flame and smoke by which it was fed.

This first experiment gave rise to other speculations. M. Charles, a very learned physician, employed inflammable air. The globes filled with this gas require no management to preserve them for a greater length of time, and are secure from catching fire.

There were men possessed of sufficient courage to confide their lives to the cords which supported a sort of basket, and who allowed themselves to be fastened to the frail balloon, subject to evident danger and events impossible to be foreseen.

The marquis d'Arlandi and M. Pilastre de Rosier made the first attempt, according to the method of M. de Montgolfier; and M. Charles shortly afterwards took flight himself, by means of his inflammable air.

I could not look at them without trembling. Besides, what was the use of all this risk and courage? If we can only fly at the mercy of the wind, and cannot direct the machine, the discovery, however admirable, will remain of no utility, and a mere plaything.

So much has been spoken and written on this subject that I may well be dispensed from saying anything more respecting it; particularly as I have no knowledge in matters of physical experiment.

I shall conclude this subject with deploring the unfortunate end of M. Pilastre de Rosier, who was the victim of his last aerostatical voyage, and wishing courage and good fortune to M. Blanchard, the most constant and intrepid of aeronauts.

The rage of discoveries has taken possession of the minds of the Parisians to such a violent degree, that they run after everything miraculous. Some time ago there was a belief in the existence of somnambu-

lists, who spoke sensibly, and to the purpose, with persons awake, and had the faculty of divining the past and foreseeing the future.

This illusion did not make any great progress; but there was another almost at the same time which imposed on all Paris.

A letter dated from Lyons announced a man who had found out a way to walk on water dry-footed, and proposed to make the experiment in the capital. He demanded a subscription to indemnify him for his expenses and trouble; the subscription was instantly filled up, and the day fixed on for his crossing the Seine.

This man did not make his appearance on the day fixed for that purpose, and pretexts were found for prolonging the farce. It was at length discovered that a wag of Lyons had taken this way of amusing himself with the credulity of the inhabitants of Paris. His intention was not apparently to insult a city of eight hundred thousand inhabitants; and we may suppose he assigned good reasons, by way of excuse, for the joke, as nothing serious happened to him.

What induced the Parisians to believe in this invention, was the 'Journal de Paris,' which announced it as a truth confirmed by experiments. The authors of this journal were themselves deceived, and justified themselves amply in publishing the letters by which they were imposed on, with the names of those who wrote and addressed them to their office.

Three years afterwards a stranger came to Paris, who in reality, in the sight of an immense number of people, crossed the river dry-footed.

This man made a mystery of the means employed by him in his experiment. He carefully concealed the shoes used by him in crossing. Probably he wished to sell his secret at a high price; but the small advantages which could be derived from it, did not seem to deserve the trouble. It is not unlikely that he had

beneath his two feet something of the shape of a boat or canoe.

We may find boats at all rivers where we want to cross them. We seldom require any extraordinary assistance for this purpose; and when we do we cannot always carry about with us these machines, which are neither light nor of easy carriage.

This experiment, however, afforded a fresh justification to the authors of the 'Journal de Paris,' who had foreseen the possibility of this discovery.

This journal brings to my recollection the immense number of periodical works published every day at Paris.

The most curious and unoccupied individual could not read the whole of them even bestowing his whole time for that purpose. I shall speak of those with which I am best acquainted,

The 'Gazette of France,' ('Gazette de France,') which appears twice a week, has not the freshest, but the most authentic news. The article 'Versailles' is interesting, on account of the nominations and presentations; it is a certain and perpetual text for all titles, dignities, and charges.

The 'Courier of Europe,' ('Courier de l'Europe,') is an English newspaper translated into French. It gives the most ample details of the debates and parliamentary harangues, and does not treat the royalist or ministerial party better than that of the opposition. This paper was in great circulation, and excited a lively interest during the last war; and it still gratifies the public curiosity respecting the proceedings of the British government.

The gazettes of Holland, Germany, and Italy, printed in France, are useful by way of contrasting and comparing intelligence. The editors of newspapers are eager to publish everything, and have not time to verify what they do publish; they are, consequently, sometimes deceived, and the necessity of

contradicting one another furnishes them with articles to fill their successive papers.

The 'Mercury of France,' formerly called the 'Mercure Galant,' has changed the order of its distribution. In place of publishing a volume per month, they now publish a part every Saturday. This is the production of a society of literary men; it embraces the arts and sciences, literature, the theatres, and political news; and it has always kept up the old custom of giving enigmas and logogriphes; an explanation of which is given in the succeeding volume.

Everybody knows the meaning of enigma, but there may be people unacquainted with that of logogriphe; for I never heard of the thing in Italy. It is thus explained in 'The Trevoux Dictionary.'

"Logogriphe, a sort of symbol in enigmatical words; it consists in some equivocal allusion or mutilation of words, by which the literal meaning differs from the thing signified; so that it holds a middle place between the rebus and true enigma or emblem."

The reputation and sale of 'The Mercury' are not kept up by these bagatelles; but had they been suppressed it would undoubtedly have diminished the number of their subscribers; for as soon as this book makes its appearance, the curious are eager to see if they have rightly conjectured the enigmas and logogriphes of the preceding volume; they fall immediately afterwards on the new pieces of the same kind, which they pass whole days in studying; and thus their occupation becomes very serious and attractive in their eyes.

A lady of my acquaintance, who possessed the knack of frequently guessing them at the first glance, found one day a diabolical enigma, which long baffled every endeavour; she at last found, or thought she had found the meaning; she was in bed, she rose and rung the bell, began to write, and sent an account of her discovery to her friends. She found next morning

that she had been mistaken.—It is impossible to paint the distressed state in which I saw her.

'The Literary Year' ('Année Litteraire') is another periodical work, which appears every week, and of which M. Freron was author on my arrival in Paris. He was a very intelligent and sensible man: nobody could give a better account of a book, or a theatrical piece than himself: he was sometimes malicious, but that was the fault of the profession.

The greatest attraction of this journal, was the war declared by him against the philosopher of Ferney; that celebrated man was weak enough to allow this to disturb his peace; Freren was always uppermost in his thoughts; he thrust him into every work, and covered him with sarcasms and ridicule, which supplied the journalist with fresh materials to fill his sheets and amuse the public. This periodical work passed into the hands of a man of merit, distinguished for the elegance of his style, and the soundness of his judgment.

'The Journal of the Learned' ('Journal des Savans') is not a work for the million; it corresponds with its title; but in general we are fonder of amusement than instruction.

The 'Legal Gazette' ('Gazette des Tribunaux') is useful to lawyers and litigants, and the 'Agricultural Journal' is interesting to cultivators; but both are very well conducted, and they find a sufficient number of readers to recompence the labours of the authors.

A periodical work which appears every month under the title of 'Bibliotheque de Romans,' was once in high repute, and is still read with a certain degree of pleasure.

A Frenchman, not more distinguished for his wealth than his noble spirit, possesses a library at Paris which I suppose to be more ample and better arranged than that of any other individual in Europe.

His catalogue is immense; but what would seem almost incredible, though I have seen it with my own

eyes, in every article we find a marginal note in the hand-writing of the possessor of this valuable collection, which proves that in the bringing together of this library, he has not been guided by ostentation, but by taste and intelligence.

His collection of ancient romances is wonderfully complete; we have here the most faithful picture of the manners, customs, and characters of every age. Very curious and interesting extracts were given from this collection by literary men under the protection and encouragement of the learned and generous possessor. These writers were after some time, for particular reasons, obliged to derive materials elsewhere; the journal, however, is still interesting, and is in no want of subscribers and readers.

A new collection, neither less useful nor less interesting, is at present published from the same library; it is a sort of universal history of the literature of every polished nation; the author's name is M. Content Dorville.

'The Literary Journal' ('Journal de Literature') certainly deserves to be read. It is very well conducted, and the criticisms are excellently written.

I shall not mention the 'Journal de Bouillon,' or 'The Provincial Advertiser' ('Affiches de Province') or a number of others, because all cannot be read and known; and I shall conclude this article with the mention of two daily papers, 'The Paris Journal' ('Journal de Paris') and 'The Journal of France, or for small Advertisements' ('Petites Affiches.')

The principal object of the latter is to give notice of property, real or personal, to be sold or let; of offices which the possessors wish to resign; of the demands of individuals; of goods lost or found; of the novelties of the shopkeepers; of the works of artists, and whatever relates to public utility and convenience.

Within these few years, literary intelligence has also been given; we find well-written accounts of books, judicious criticisms, and sensible observations.

'The Journal de Paris' is not less useful or interesting; it publishes every day the most recent and authentic news, and gives an account of projects, discoveries, and discussions, of every kind.

Instances of valour, virtue, and beneficence, find a place in this journal; it is the channel of communication to the public of works of genius and mechanical discovery. The authors of this journal never fail to extol merit in proper terms, and to point out in modest language those passages of a work which require elucidation or correction.

The public sometimes complain that the 'Journal de Paris' is not sufficiently rich in novelty; but how is it possible to have something new every day? Besides, we cannot say, write, or print, everything.

It always contains a theatrical article, which might alone content a great number of the curious and subscribers; the 'Journal de France' has also taken this subject in hand, but there is no harm in seeing dramatical works depicted by two different authors.

The day after the first representation of a new piece, you see in these two journals some account of it, with the history of its success, and critical remarks; sometimes the journals agree, and sometimes they differ in opinion; the one is more severe and the other much more indulgent; but I shall not name them, as they are known to the public.

These accounts and criticisms are a very useful lesson to young authors. Other journals give, in the course of time, extracts from, and remarks on, the same pieces; but dilatory assistance is useless; the promptitude of the journals just mentioned enlightens the author on the instant, and a piece which did not succeed at its first representation, sometimes rises at a second, and gives as much pleasure as it formerly excited disgust.

I shall be told, perhaps, that the disgusting or wearisome passages are pointed out by the public; but how can the authors and actors discover accurately the cause of the ill-humour of the assembly?

The authors of the journals, from their own judgment, and that of the spectators, which they have had time to analyse with attention and coolness, give an account of what produced a good or a bad effect, and communicate sometimes very salutary advice.

This is my way of thinking respecting the utility of these periodical works, for which I have a high estimation, but in which I would not be employed for all the gold in the world. There is nothing so oppressive as to be obliged to labour every day, whether disposed or indisposed to the task. However much that task may be distributed among many writers, the engagements with the public are terrible, and the difficulty of pleasing everybody is enough to drive one to despair.

CHAPTER XXI.

Death of madame Sophia of France—Plan of a new journal—Adventures of an American and Neapolitan lady—'Dido,' a lyric tragedy, in three acts—New sort of dramas at the opera of Paris—'The Barber of Seville,' and 'The Marriage of Figaro' at the French theatre—A few words respecting other authors and persons of my acquaintance—Translation of one of my pieces into French—Its failure at the Italian theatre—Birth of the duke of Normandy—New sort of illuminations—A few observations on fashion—A few words on an extraordinary procedure—The taste of the French for ballads (vaudeville.)

I AM now drawing near to the conclusion of my Memoirs, and I support with courage the fatigue of a task which begins to weary me; but a fatal event, which it is now incumbent on me to mention in this place, makes me feel the disagreeable nature of the burden which I have imposed on myself.

In the year 1783, madame Sophia of France departed this life. What a loss for the court! What an affliction for her affectionate sisters! Her virtues rendered her respectable, and her gentleness of disposition inspired all who knew her with love and confidence. Her benevolent heart anticipated the wants of indigence, and she made incredible efforts to conceal her wit under the veil of piety and modesty. This princess was lamented and regretted by all who had the honour of approaching her, and by myself not less than others. I found some consolation with madame Tacher and the marchioness of Chabut, her daughter, who had the same cause for affliction that I had. The conversation of these ladies renewed the memory of my loss, and their kindness for me alleviated my grief.

It is not, however, usual with me to be affected in the keenest manner at the death of my friends or relations. I possess a feeling disposition; and the smallest ailment, the slightest inconvenience which happens to them, affects and grieves me in the extreme; whereas I look coolly on death as the tribute we owe to nature, and against which we must derive consolation in our reason.

How happens it then that I am still as much afflicted for the loss of my august scholar as the first day afterwards? In the justice which I render to merit, am I to be suspected of self-love or vanity? Alas! my friends do me the favour to believe that it proceeds rather from gratitude.

On going over my memoranda, I find the plan of a journal conceived by myself. This project may seem in contradiction with the aversion which I displayed in the 20th chapter for the assiduity requisite in a periodical work; but I was not the person who was to have the charge of it.

A young American, of French extraction, was sent by his parents to this capital for his studies. He made great advances, and was more anxious to profit

from the means of instruction within his reach, than to seek opportunities of amusement. He had suffered so much in his passage that he dreaded the ocean, and displayed an unwillingness again to expose himself to it.

Till he could get the consent of his family to remain in France, he endeavoured to procure employment. He called on me; he was well acquainted with Italian, and wished to translate my works into French, but I convinced him of the difficulty of such an undertaking. He yielded to my reasons, and renounced the design; but as he was fond of literature, he wished to derive some advantage from his knowledge of Italian. To satisfy him, I drew up the following prospectus of a periodical work:—

"Journal of Italian and French correspondence.

"An Italian, who has been some time settled in Paris, keeps up a literary correspondence with several persons of his own country. Their letters embrace all subjects susceptible of remark, observation, and criticism. History, science, arts, discoveries, projects, typography, theatres, music, laws, police, manners, customs, national character, public festivals, ceremonies, news, anecdotes, everything, in short, is placed under contribution. The contents of these letters must be equally interesting to the country from which they are dispatched, and that to which they are addressed.

"When a book, a drama, or poem, or any work whatever, of either of the two nations, makes its appearance, it is communicated to the other. Extracts, analyses, and comparisons, are sent; matters subject to discussion or declaration, will not remain unanswered, and harangues, dissertations, and whatever may contribute to interest readers, will not fail to be inserted.

"Is it a rash undertaking to propose a new journal in Paris?

"The authors who have undertaken this, flatter

themselves that it is not, as each journal has its partizans, and they may acquire them as well as others. French literature has been long in great favour with the Italians. It would seem as if the Italians were grateful to the French for having sustained and embellished the great work of the restoration of letters, towards which they were the first contributors.

"But it seems also, that the French wish occasionally to go back to the source, and delight to converse with the great masters of the good age of Italian literature.

"This language is more than ever in vogue in France. The taste for the new music has greatly contributed to this; the libraries of Paris abound with Italian books, which are read, relished, and translated, and the travels of Frenchmen into Italy have become more frequent than ever.

"These objects appear just, reasonable, and inviting; so that if the authors of this journal are deceived in their expectations, it must be the fault of the execution and not of the design. However, those persons who are to be engaged in it, will not fail in interesting materials, certain notices, well established correspondencies, zeal for the public, and attention to their own interests. For it is idle to say, I sacrifice myself to the honour and good of society; the rich man dislikes labour, and the man who is not rich does not forget himself."

The young man, enchanted with this prospectus, found out four associates ready to second him. I procured for them correspondents at Rome, Naples, Florence, Bologna, Milan, and Venice; and they waited for a sufficiency of matter for six months before publishing the prospectus.

In the mean time a Neapolitan female arrived in Paris. She had an engagemeut as an actress in the Italian comic opera, and came from London, where the manager, by whom she had been employed was a bankrupt, so that she was under the necessity of re-

pairing to France. She was neither young nor pretty, but she was cunning and artful, and added hypocrisy to the ordinary artifices of her profession.

I had the honour of her first visit. The American thought her amiable. He was somewhat religiously inclined, and the Neapolitan lady had her beads always in her hands. She lighted every Saturday a lamp before the image of our lady of Loretto, and while the young man learned to pray in Italian, he forgot his undertaking and his associates.

It was in vain for me to remonstrate with him, or even to reproach him; he was in love. All his chagrin was, that his fair one was married, and that he could not espouse her.

The journal did not go on well. The young men engaged began to despise the person who had the conduct of the work. I did what I could to encourage them; I flattered myself with the idea of restoring their chief to reason; but we lost him altogether.

On entering the house of the sorceress one day, he found her on her knees. "Ah my friend," said she, on seeing him, "come and prostrate yourself before the Virgin Mary, and return thanks to God with me; a miracle has taken place, my husband is dead."

She then shewed him a letter containing the certificate of his death, which she had just received. In short, they were married. The wife was jealous, and would not remain in Paris; the husband was ashamed; they were no longer visible. They left the place a few days afterwards; so that the journal was at an end before its commencement.

We complain of the women whose graces enchant us, whose charms seduce us, and whose caprices sometimes ruin us. But their charms are known, and we ourselves lend them the arms with which they enslave us.

Hypocrisy alone deceives us, and this artifice is rarely practised in France, as few persons can there be found weak enough to be deluded by it.

Prudent women are more amiable in France than elsewhere, and artful women are not so contemptible there as in other countries.

In the year 1783, the opera of 'Dido,' written by M. Marmontel, and set to music by M. Piccini, was represented for the first time. It is, in my opinion, the master-piece of the one, and the triumph of the other.

No musical drama approaches nearer to real tragedy than this. M. Marmontel has imitated nobody; he has appropriated the fable to himself, and given it all the probability and regularity of which such a work is susceptible.

Some say that Marmontel took his drama from Metastasio, but they are mistaken. 'Dido' was the first work of the Italian poet; we discover in it strong marks of a superior genius, but we may remark at the same time the errors of youth; and the French author would not have succeeded had he endeavoured to imitate it.

M. Piccini, after long labouring on indifferent poems, was at last enabled to display his talents to advantage. The part of 'Dido' was represented in a superior manner by madame Huberti, excellent both as an actress and a musician; and the work is justly regarded as a precious monument of the French opera.

This spectacle had for some years before this lost a great deal of its reputation; but it has risen prodigiously in estimation since they adopted the resolution of multiplying novelties and varying the representation.

The same opera, whether good or bad, was formerly given for three or four months, and the spectators diminished in number every day; but at present the theatre is always full, and there is no small difficulty in procuring yearly boxes.

A new species of dramas introduced there, which may be called decorated comic operas, has also greatly

contributed to the pleasures afforded by this spectacle. 'Colinette at Court,' 'The Embarrassment of Wealth,' 'The Caravan,' 'Panurge in the Island of Lanterns,' and a number of others, are mere sketches of comedies without intrigue or interest, and of which the dialogue does not afford sufficient time for the developement of the plot; but the charms of the music, the beauty of the ballet, the magnificence of the decorations give a merit to the entertainment as a whole, and contribute to the pleasure of the public. We may well say here the sauce is better than the fish.

I do not mean to detract from the merit of the authors who have produced these bagatelles. They have merely conformed to the demands made to them; they have succeeded in assisting the other and more essential parts of the entertainment, and it seems the public is satisfied.

This very public, which we sometimes accuse of being so difficult and unrelenting, is at other times extremely docile and indulgent. You have only to come forward with articles under their real name, without arrogating to them more than they deserve, and the public is ready to applaud what affords amusement without inquiring into the nature of the subject.

'The Marriage of Figaro' had the greatest success at the French theatre, because the author put before this title that of 'The Frolicsome Day' ('Folle Journée.')

Nobody is better acquainted with the defects of his piece than M. Beaumarchais himself; he has given proof of his talents in this department; and had he wished to make a regular comedy of his 'Figaro,' he would have succeeded as well as another; but he merely attempted to divert the public; and this object he completely attained.

The success of this comedy was extraordinary in every respect. At the comic theatres of Paris, two or three pieces are regularly acted every day; but

'Figaro' constituted the sole entertainment: the public flocked to it two or three hours before the drawing up of the curtain, and waited three quarters of an hour later than ordinary without being wearied or betraying the slightest symptoms of discontent. It is now at its eighty-sixth representation, and is applauded as much as ever; and what is most singular, those very persons who criticise it at leaving the theatre, are the first to return and to amuse themselves with what they have been censuring.

M. de Beaumarchais gave, some years before, a comedy entitled 'The Barber of Seville,' and the same Spaniard who bore the name of 'Figaro,' constituted the principal subject of 'The Frolicsome Day.'

The former of these two pieces was highly relished and applauded. The author had been implicated in a law-suit, and defended his cause himself; the papers written by him were gay, droll, and excellently composed; they were universally read, and the general subject of conversation. He had the address to insert in 'The Barber of Seville,' under feigned names, anecdotes which recalled the memory of his law-suit, and covered his adversaries with ridicule; all which contributed very much to the success of his piece.

In 'The Marriage of Figaro,' there were no sarcasms levelled against individuals, but an abundance against all descriptions of people. Nobody, however, could complain, as the criticisms were directed against vice and ridicule which were everywhere to be met with. Those who find themselves in the predicament which is the object of the general satire, have no right to complain.

The connoisseurs and amateurs of the correct models complained loudly against these two works, which, as they said, had a tendency to degrade the French theatre; they observed their countrymen carried away by a sort of fanatical contagion; and they dreaded lest the disease should become universal.

Experience, however, has demonstrated the con-

trary. There were exhibited at the same time, on the boards of the French theatre, new plays of a very different description, which met with all the success that could be expected: for example 'The Coriolanus' of M. de la Harpe, 'The Seducer' of M. Bievre, 'The Difficult Avowals,' and 'The False Coquette' of M. Vigé. This last author was even encouraged by the public; these first displays of his talents were considered as in the very best taste, tone, and style, and such as to give every reason to hope that he would prove himself the prop of good comedy.

I am very much interested in the success of this young author, because I have the honour to be particularly acquainted with him. He is the brother of madame le Brun, of the royal academy of painting, and whose works are an honour to her sex, her country, and her age, and the son-in-law of M. Revière, counsellor and secretary of legation of the court of Saxony. He is the husband of a lady who grew up under my eyes, and whose virtues and talents prove the care bestowed on her education by an incomparable mother, a mother of nine children, every one of whom answers her care and vigilance, and promises to be the parent's consolation.

I made this fortunate acquaintance at madame Bertinazzi's, the widow of M. Carlin. I frequented that house during her husband's life time, and have not quitted it since.

It is impossible to be more amiable than madame Carlin. She has a great deal of wit and gaiety, and is always placid, kind, and prepossessing. Her society is not numerous, but it is well chosen; she retains all her old friends, and she is fond of play as well as myself. I endeavour to imitate her good playing.

Reverses only throw the most phlegmatic gamesters into great agitation. Madame Carlin is very keen, and apt to break out as well as other people, but

she is so graceful in her transports, and so agreeable in her manner of reproaching, that we may very well say that her manner becomes her.

Towards the close of the year 1784, whilst I was engaged in the second part of my Memoirs, one of my friends spoke to me of a business very much connected with that I was employed in.

A literary gentleman whom I have not the honour of knowing, sent one of my comedies, translated by him into French, to M. Courcelle of the Italian theatre, requesting the actor to present it to me, and to get it acted if I was pleased with his translation, with the understanding, as he very kindly chose to state, that the honour and profit were to belong to the author.

The piece in question was intitled in Italian 'Un Curioso Accidente,' (A Droll Adventure,) and you will find it mentioned in the second part of my Memoirs.

The translation appeared to me exact; the style was not in my manner, but every one has his own. The translator changed the title into that of 'The Dupe of Himself,' which I do not disapprove. I gave my consent to the representation, the comedians received it at the reading with acclamation; it was given the following year, and completely failed.

One part of the piece which occasioned the greatest pleasure in Italy, shocked the Parisian public; I know the French delicacy, and I ought to have foreseen the consequence, but as the translation was executed by a Frenchman, and it was applauded by the actors, I allowed myself to be guided by them.

Had I been present at the rehearsals, I should have anticipated the danger; but I was unwell, and the comedians were eager to produce it.

I had distributed several tickets for the first representation, and nobody came to give me any information respecting it. This did not look well. I went to bed however without learning anything of the event; but my barber, with the tears in his eyes,

gave me an account of the solemn condemnation of the piece. I instantly withdrew it; and as I felt myself a good deal better that day, I dined with a very good appetite.

Long accustomed both to a favourable and unfavourable reception from the public, I can do that public justice without any sacrifice of my tranquillity. The most disagreeable part of the business was that nobody called on me, or inquired how my recovery was going on. I wrote to my friends to learn whether my piece had incensed them against me. It was, on the contrary, the excess of their friendship and sensibility which prevented them from giving vent to their chagrin before me. When we saw one another again, I was obliged to assume the office of consoler.

The public rejoicings induced me to quit my room, and indemnified me for the illness and the unpleasant circumstances experienced by me.

The queen was delivered of another prince; on the 27th of March 1785, the duke of Normandy was born. The usual illuminations took place at Paris, but certain rich individuals distinguished themselves on this occasion in a new and noble manner. The fronts of their palaces were adorned from top to bottom with a number of illuminated designs, executed with great skill. It was impossible for decorations to be more striking or splendid.

This new taste will, in all probability, be continued at Paris, and every one will wish, in future, to have such a modish illumination as his circumstances can afford.

Fashion has always been the rage of the French. They give the ton to all Europe in whatever relates to theatres, decorations, dress, trinkets, and everything where pleasure is concerned. The French are everywhere imitated.

In the beginning of every season, there is to be seen, in the Mercery-street at Venice, a dressed figure, which is called the French doll *(poupée da France.)*

This is the prototype which every woman follows, and whatever resembles this original is considered beautiful. The Venetian women are as fond of changes as the French; the tailors, mantua-makers, and millinery shops take advantage of this; and if France does not supply a sufficiency of modes, the Venetian tradesmen contrive to make some slight change on the doll, and to pass off their own ideas for transalpine.

When I gave at Venice my comedy entitled 'The Country Mania,' I spoke a great deal of a female dress, which was called 'the marriage.' This was a dress of a plain stuff, with a garniture of two ribbands of different colours, the model of which was taken from the doll. On my arrival in France, I inquired if such a fashion had ever existed? Nobody knew anything of it; there had never been such a fashion; it was pronounced ridiculous, and I was even laughed at for asking.

I experienced the same mortification in speaking of the Polish dresses, which were adopted by the women in Italy when I left it. Twelve years afterwards, when I saw the Polish dresses at Paris, I was quite charmed with them.

The mode in dress, it is true, experienced a long interregnum in France; but it has again resumed its ancient empire.

What a number of changes in a short time! Polish and Jewish dresses, furs, English and Turkish dresses, frocks, pierrots, hats of a hundred shapes, bonnets without number, and head-dresses! . . . . Head-dresses!

This part of the female dress, so essential for the setting off their grace and beauty, was some time ago at the highest point of perfection. It is now, I beg pardon of the ladies for saying so, insupportable in my eyes.

The touzled hair, and toupees which fall over their eyebrows, disfigure them sadly.

Women are wrong, in my opinion, in following any

general mode of dressing their heads; every one ought to consult her glass, to examine her features, and adapt the arrangement of her hair to the style of her countenance, and make her hair-dressers follow her orders.

But before my Memoirs leave the press, perhaps the female head-dresses, and many other fashions, will have changed; the size of the buckles, and the brims of the hats will be diminished, the female dresses will be more noble and dignified, and the breeches of the gentlemen will be made larger.

A great affair took place at Paris in the same year, 1785. State prisoners were shut up in the Bastile; the king gave orders to the parliament to try them, and the sentence was pronounced on the 30th May of the following year.

I shall not speak of the subject of a contestation which everybody is acquainted with. The newspapers have said enough about it, and the pleadings for the accused have been circulated in every corner.

An illustrious personage, the victim of an inconceivable deception, has been freed from all accusation.

A stranger, implicated without reason in this affair, was also exculpated.

An intriguing, wicked, and criminal woman was condemned to punishment; the name of her contumacious husband was made known and disgraced.

A man who lent his pen to the swindling was banished for life; and a young and foolish girl, who was an accomplice without knowing it, was saved in consideration of her ignorance.

This singular and complicated cause occupied the public mind for ten months; it was the subject of daily conversation in all circles and societies at Paris; those who from their connections were interested in the issue, lived in perpetual disquiet, and the wits made couplets.

This is the ton of the nation: if the French lose a battle, an epigram consoles them; if they are loaded

with a new impost, a ballad indemnifies them; if a serious affair occupy them, they are enlivened with a song; and the most simple and naïve style is always seasoned with something sarcastic and biting.

CHAPTER XXII.

Saint Germain-en-Laye—Acknowledgments to some of my friends—My usual way of living—My secret to procure sleep—My temperament—Arrival of the chevalier Cappello, the Venetian ambassador, at Paris—New representation of my 'Surly Benefactor' at Versailles—Retirement of four authors from the French theatre—Pieces acted latterly on this theatre—Other pieces played at the Italian theatre—Compliment of the author—His excuses—A few words respecting two Italian authors—Conclusion of the work.

I FORGOT to mention in my Memoirs the town of St Germain. It is a royal residence, four leagues from Paris, and at present an agreeable retreat for numbers of people. Some go there for tranquillity, and others from motives of economy. Every person finds the society which suits him there. Were I not detained at Paris on business, I should certainly pass the remainder of my days in that agreeable spot.

The strongest attraction for me would be the opportunity which it would afford me of being near a respectable friend, whom I tenderly love from inclination and gratitude.

M. Huet has been several years resident there. I had frequent opportunities of seeing him when he was at Paris. There is not a more agreeable man alive than he is, or a more solid friend. When the royal treasury was not so well regulated as it is now, M. Huet never refused to advance me the sums of which

I was in want; and when the king ordered me a gratification of a hundred and fifty louis-dors, for my 'Surly Benefactor,' this generous friend sent me on the instant three bags of 1,200 livres, and undertook to wait the conveniency of the treasurer of the privy purse (Menus Plaisirs) for his reimbursement. These are services which ought not to be forgotten.

I congratulate myself more and more on having undertaken this work, as it affords me an opportunity of shewing my gratitude towards those who have obliged me.

Those readers of my Memoirs who have no reason to interest themselves respecting the persons whom I feel it an honour and a pleasure to name, cannot take it amiss that I bring them acquainted with men who deserve to be known.

I must not forget madame de la Bergerie in this article. M. and madame Haudry, her father and mother, were among my first acquaintances on my arrival in Paris. I was quite at home in their house. I witnessed the birth of their daughter, who grew up every day in beauty, wisdom, and talents.

Mademoiselle Haudry lost her father, mother, and paternal uncle, in the flower of her youth; this loss was attended with that of a part of her property.

M. de la Bergerie, a young man of uncommon propriety of conduct, with a solid mind and excellent heart, rendered justice to the merits of the young woman, asked her in marriage, and espoused her. He attended to his wife's interests, and effected her reinstatement in the estate of Bleneau. This is a charming family, whom I enjoy in winter, and regret in summer.

A number of my acquaintances go into the country in the fine season, and I remain at Paris.—I should like to visit some of my friends for a few days in turn, but the health of my wife will not admit of it.

She had a very serious illness this very year, out of which M. de Longlois, her physician, extricated her.

Independently of his science, his punctuality and mildness are a great consolation to his patients. Pleurisies always leave alarming marks behind them; I dare not, therefore, quit her; my poor wife has had so much attention for me, that I ought to have some for her in return.

By way of a change of air, I sometimes pass a few days in the environs of Paris, sometimes with madame Bouchard, and madame Legendre her daughter, at Belleville, a charming house, where one finds a union of talents and all the pleasures of society. Sometimes I visit madame Alphand, or mademoiselle Desglands, at Passy; two charming neighbours, of whom the gentleness of the one, and the vivacity of the other, form the most perfect harmony, because their minds are reasonable, and their hearts excellent.

I go sometimes also to Clignancour, to enjoy the superb garden of M. Agironi. He is a respectable Venetian, who obtained the king's letters patent for the sale of a medicinal water composed by him. His medicine must be good, for he has sold it upwards of twenty years at Paris, and it has brought him in a considerable fortune.

I pass the rest of my time in my ordinary mode of living in town. I rise at nine o'clock in the morning, and breakfast on chocolate. I labour till mid-day, and then walk till two o'clock. I am fond of society, and go out in quest of it. I frequently dine in the city, or at home, with the society of my wife.

Madame and mademoiselle Farinelli are of the number of my wife's friends; the mother was one of the principal actresses of the opera in Italy; the daughter teaches the piano-forte, and Italian and French music at Paris; she has a number of scholars, and her talents and morals are equally honourable to her.

Madame Rinaldi is also one of the natives of my country, who sometimes visit us; and M. Rinaldi has been so friendly as to copy out my work. He is an Italian master of great reputation. There are several

in this town, all excellent, as I believe; but M. Rinaldi is my friend; I have a just esteem for him, and all those to whom I ever recommended him have returned me thanks.

What digressions! what gossiping! . . . . Pardon me, readers, this is not gossiping: I am living in Paris; I announce to the Parisians persons who may be of utility to them; and I should be very glad to have it in my power to contribute to the advantage of the one party, and the satisfaction of the other.

I return to my regimen . . . . You will say here also, perhaps, that I ought to omit it.—You are in the right; but all this is in my head, and I must be delivered of it by degrees; I cannot spare you a single comma.

After dinner I am not fond of either working or walking. Sometimes I go to the theatre, but I am most generally in parties till nine o'clock in the evening. I always return before ten o'clock. I take two or three small cakes with a glass of wine and water, and this is the whole of my supper. I converse with my wife till midnight; we sleep together conjugally in the same bed in winter, and in two beds in the same room in summer; I very soon fall asleep, and pass the night tranquilly.

It sometimes happens to me, as well as every other person, to have my head occupied with something capable of retarding my sleep. In this case I have a certain remedy to lull myself asleep; and it is this:

I had long projected a vocabulary of the Venetian dialect, and I had even communicated my intention to the public, who are still in expectation of it. While labouring at this tedious and disgusting work, I soon discovered that it threw me asleep. I laid it therefore aside, and I profited by its narcotic faculty.

Whenever I feel my mind agitated by any moral cause, I take at random some word of my national language, and translate it into Tuscan and French. In the same manner I pass in review all the words

which follow in the alphabetical order, and I am sure to fall asleep at the third or fourth version. My recipe has never once failed me.

It is not difficult to demonstrate the cause and effect of this phenomenon. A painful idea requires to be replaced by an opposite or indifferent idea; and the agitation of the mind once calmed, the senses become tranquil, and are deadened by sleep.

But this remedy, however excellent, might not be useful to everyone. A man of too keen and feeling a disposition would not succeed. The temperament must be such as that with which nature has favoured me. My moral qualities bear a resemblance to my physical; I dread neither cold nor heat, and I neither allow myself to be inflamed by rage, nor intoxicated by joy.

Drawing towards the conclusion of my Memoirs, I come to more and more subjects of an agreeable nature.

The chevalier Cappello, the Venetian ambassador at this court, arrived at Paris in the month of December 1785; he is the seventh minister of my nation whom I have seen in France.

I have paid my court to all of them, and they in return have shewn me kindness; but this last mentioned gentleman acted in such a gracious, tender, and interesting manner towards me, that I feel myself overpowered with joy, respect, and gratitude.

I had not the honour to know him in Venice, but I was well acquainted with the Cappello family, which is one of the most ancient and respectable of the republic. The chevalier was young when I quitted my country; and this is an additional reason for my surprise to find one of my most zealous protectors in this patrician.

I will not attempt his eulogy in this place. I know his modesty, and that he would not suffer it. Besides, if he is wise and just, mindful of the duties of humanity; if he is noble, polite, and generous; he

merely discharges what is expected from his situation. But the qualities of his heart are of no common description. Few men interest themselves as he does in the wants of suffering humanity; his door is not shut against the unfortunate; his presence is not inaccessible to the ill-dressed, and the national title is sufficient to insure his protection. His excellency must pardon me: I could not avoid giving a small sample of his virtues; . . . . . but I am silent. I pass from one subject which is flattering to me to another in which I am not less interested.

Spectacles were given at Versailles in honour of the illustrious strangers distinguished by the court of France; and my 'Surly Benefactor' was among the number of pieces selected for that occasion.

My self-love was flattered by this circumstance, and because M. Preville, who had retired from the theatre, was to act in it.

This incomparable man did not fail to please, and even surprise me, as usual; my piece gained new partisans, and myself new protectors.

The retirement of M. and madame Preville, and of M. Brisard and mademoiselle Fanié, is a great loss to the French stage. There are still, however, good actors and actresses remaining to preserve the reputation which it has so justly acquired.

They have given out several pieces, both tragic and comic, at the French theatre, of which the greatest part have received the applause of the public.

I seldom go to the theatre, and therefore cannot speak of the pieces which I only know by hearsay. I have seen, however, 'The Inconstant' of M. Collin; the piece appeared to me charming, and the actors excellent. M. Molé, in particular, appears as new and astonishing as ever. He is the same young, keen, agreeable, and brilliant man that he was twenty years ago.

Does this celebrated actor appear the same man in 'The Inconstant' that he does in the part of Dorval

in the 'Surly Benefactor?' I imagine he would succeed equally in the part of Geronte.

The Italians have not been less fortunate latterly.

'Richard Cœur-de-Lion' had the greatest success. M. Sedaine, a member of the French academy, and M. Gretry, supported each other in this charming comic opera, and M. Clairval heightened still more the merit of both poet and musician.

When the opera of 'Richard' was withdrawn, it appeared difficult to supply its place with anything which would be equally successful. This miracle was effected by 'Nina, or the Distracted Lover;' and if the success of this piece did not surpass the preceding, it at least equalled it.

This work of M. Marsoiller had the merit of obtaining the public indulgence on the stage, for an unfortunate being without crime and without reproach; and the music of M. d'Alerac was found good, and suited to the subject.

But madame de Gazon, who had already given so many proofs of her talents in every line, in every character, and in the most interesting situations, displayed such skill and truth in the extraordinary part of Nina, that we imagined we beheld a new actress, or rather the unfortunate wretch whose character and ravings she imitated.

I am now arrived at the year 1787, which is the eightieth of my age, and that to which I have limited the course of my Memoirs.

I have completed my eightieth year; my work is also finished.

All is over, and I proceed to send my volumes to the press.

This last chapter does not, therefore, touch on the events of the current year; but I have still some duties to discharge.

I must begin with returning thanks to those persons who have reposed so much confidence in me as to honour me with their subscriptions.

I do not speak of the kindness and favours of the king and court; this is not the place to mention them.

I have named, in my work, some of my friends, and even some of my protectors. I beg pardon of them; if I have done so without their permission, it is not through vanity; the occasion has suggested it; their names have dropped from my pen, the heart has seized on the instant, and the hand has not been unwilling.

For example, the following is one of the fortunate occasions I allude to. I was unwell a few days ago; the count Alfieri did me the honour to call on me; I knew his talents, but his conversation impressed on me the wrong which I should have done in omitting him.

He is a very intelligent and learned literary man, who principally excels in the art of Sophocles and Euripides, and after these great models he has framed his tragedies.

They have gone through two editions in Italy, and are at present in the press of Didot at Paris. I shall enter into no details respecting them, as they may be seen and judged of by every one.

During my convalescence, M. Caccia, a banker in Paris, my friend and countryman, sent me a book addressed to him from Italy for me.

It was a collection of French Epigrams and Madrigals translated into Italian by the count Roncali, of the city of Brescia, in the Venetian dominions.

This charming poet has merely translated the thoughts; he has said the same things in fewer words, and he has fallen upon as brilliant and striking points in his own language as those of his originals.

I had the honour of seeing M. Roncali twelve years ago at Paris, and he allows me to hope that I shall have the good fortune to see him again. This is infinitely flattering to me; but I earnestly entreat him to make haste, as my career is far advanced, and, what is still worse, I am extremely fatigued.

I have undertaken too long and too laborious a work for my age, and I have employed three years on it, always dreading lest I should not have the pleasure of seeing it finished.

However, I am still in life, thanks to God, and I flatter myself that I shall see my volumes printed, distributed, and read. If they be not praised, I hope at least they will not be despised.

I shall not be accused of vanity or presumption in daring to hope for some share of favour for my Memoirs; for, had I thought that I should absolutely displease, I would not have taken so much pains; and if in the good and ill which I say of myself, the balance inclines to the favourable side, I owe more to nature than to study.

All the application employed by me, in the construction of my pieces, has been that of not disfiguring nature, and all the care taken by me in my Memoirs has been that of telling only the truth.

The criticism of my pieces may have the correction and improvement of comedy in view; but the criticism of my Memoirs will be of no advantage to literature.

However, if any writer should think proper to employ his time on me for the sole purpose of vexing me, he would lose his labour. I am of a pacific disposition; I have always preserved my coolness of character; at my age I read little, and I read only amusing books.

END OF THE MEMOIRS.

SEQUEL

TO

THE MEMOIRS OF GOLDONI.

GOLDONI survived the period at which he closes his Memoirs no less than five years; and it is lamentable to be obliged to add, that two or three of the latest of them, were much embittered by the events of the French Revolution, which deprived him of his pension. The indigence to which he was exposed, at length however awakened the dormant sympathy of the French rulers, and he was about to receive a compensation, when his death which took place at Paris in 1792, at the advanced age of eighty-five, precluded the necessity. The collected works of this ingenious and ready writer, amount to no less than thirty-one volumes octavo.

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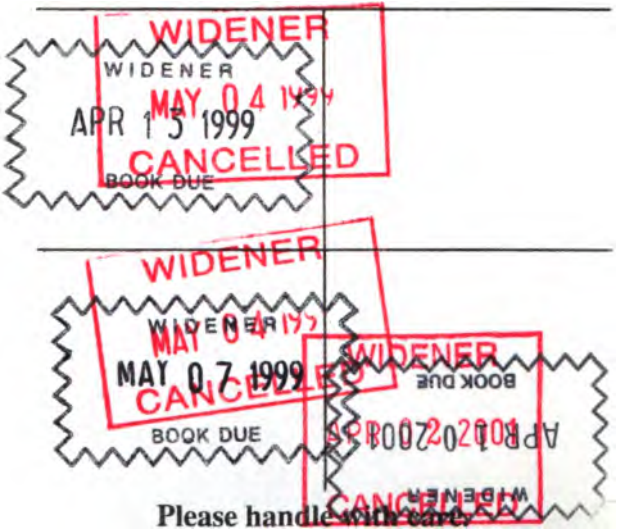

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